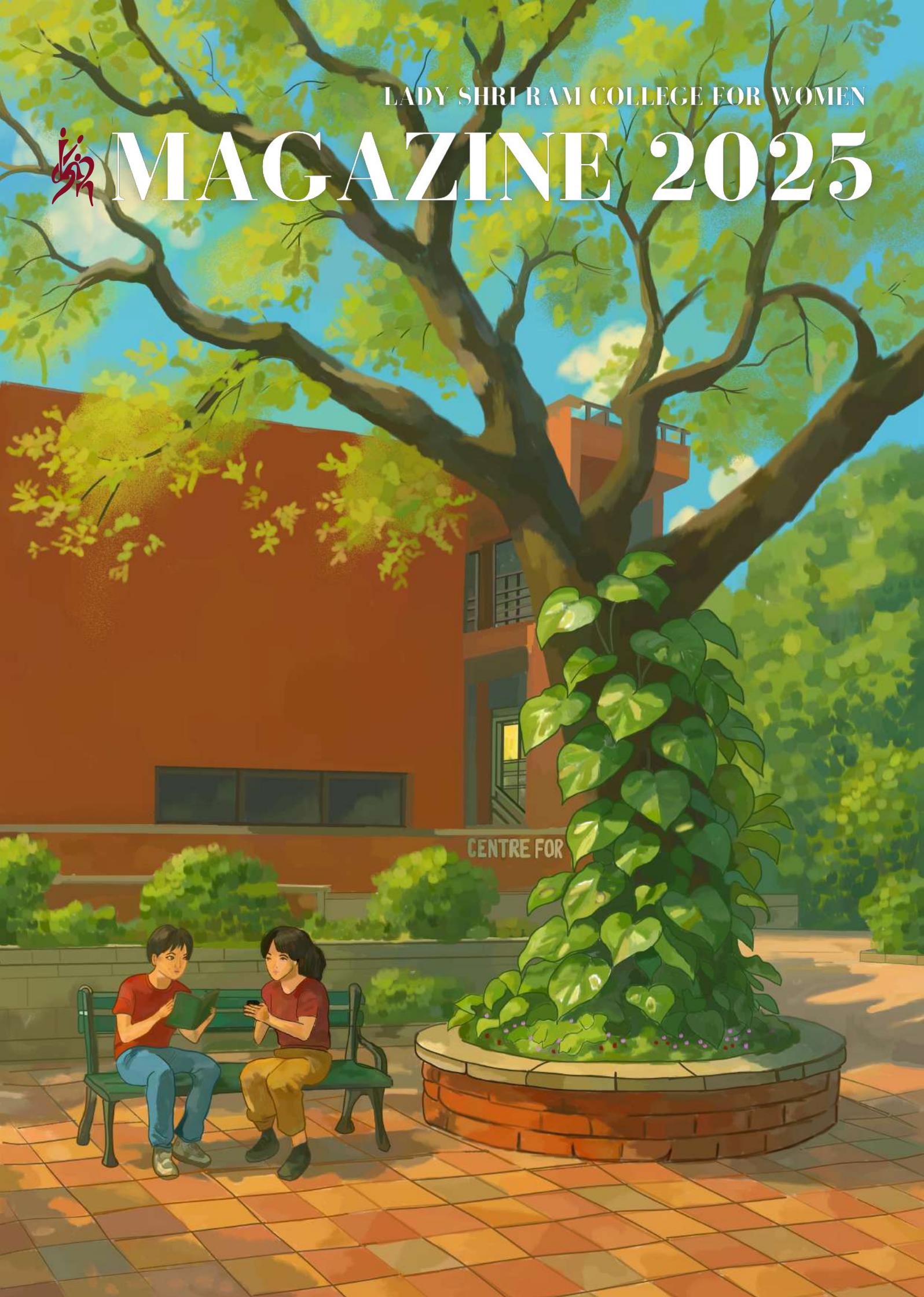


LADY SHRI RAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN



MAGAZINE 2025





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COVER IMAGE DESCRIPTION

Two students sit on a bench under a large tree, reading and talking. The tree is wrapped in green vines, and behind them stands the Peace Center building. Soft sunlight filters through the leaves, creating gentle patterns of light and shadow on the tiled ground, adding to the calm and thoughtful mood of the scene.

VOTE OF THANKS

This magazine would not have been possible without the guidance and support of the Acting Principal Dr. Kanika Ahuja, the Vice-Principal, Dr. Sanjoy Roy Chowdhury, and our staff advisors Dr. Jonathan Koshy Varghese, Dr. Kanchan Verma, and Ms Sheetal Yadav. We would also like to thank members of the administration and the Principal's Office Staff: Mr. Shailesh Kumar, Mr. Pradeep Kumar, Mr. Hardeep Rawat, Mr. Deepak Negi, Mr. Sanjay Anand, Ms. Shahana Parveen, Ms. Sangeeta Singh for assisting us in the production of this magazine. The team would also like to thank our language advisors - Ms. Maitreyee Mandal, Dr. Tripti Bassi, Mr. Mahesh S.Panicker, Dr. Vandana Bhan, Ms. Shalu Chopra, Ms. Neha Kumari, Ms. Mehvish Rashid. We are also grateful to the teaching and non-teaching staff for their unwavering support, throughout the year. We express our gratitude to the entire student body and each member of our vibrant team, who have kept us motivated in all our endeavours. Lastly, the team also extends its appreciation to Mr. Darshan Kumar Bhatia for his patience and consistent collaboration in helping publish this magazine

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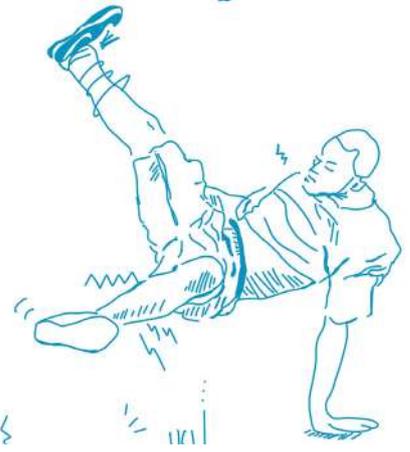


SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM



LANGUAGE EDITORS

INDEX



1. From The Editors' Desk
2. Student Union's Note
3. Principal's Message
4. Principal's Retirement
5. Coffee pe Charcha
6. Closing Chapters
7. Interview Section
8. Feature Articles
9. Language Articles
10. Comic Strips
11. Yadon ki Almari: Batch Photos



In the spirit of the current zeitgeist, we find ourselves witnessing a rapid surge in the automation of practices that humanity has spent centuries learning, perfecting, and cherishing. This isn't a new phenomenon, when calculators emerged, mathematicians likely viewed them with suspicion; when typewriters appeared, calligraphers may have felt a sense of loss. But there's a critical distinction to be made between automating tasks to ease the burdens of life, and automating the very essence of what makes life meaningful.

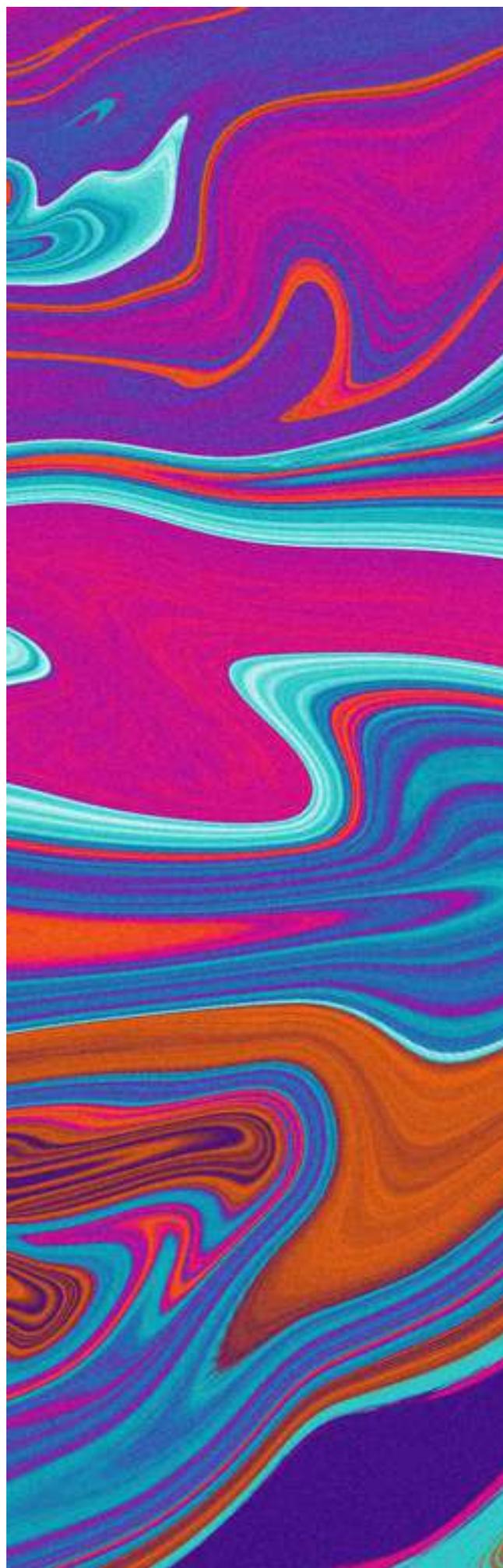
In our view, the use of AI-generated art falls into the latter. The act of automating art, by its very nature, fractures its emotional core. It is not merely a replication, it is a form of theft. It borrows, often without consent, from the hands and hearts of those who have spent years mastering their craft. It strips away the feeling, the soul embedded in each line, each brushstroke, each vision.

Some argue that AI makes art more accessible. But has art ever been inaccessible? Humanity has always found a way to create, on cave walls, in the dust, on steamed car windows, with nothing but fingers and imagination. Art does not require fancy supplies or digital platforms. It requires intent. Presence. Emotion. And so, the accessibility argument begins to collapse under its own contradiction.

With this magazine's cover, designed in a style inspired by Studio Ghibli, we hope to communicate something deeper. This piece is our quiet homage to all the artists who have felt displaced, disheartened, or disregarded in this changing moment. To the student community and the broader audience reading this: we simply ask that you recognize that art is not disposable. It is not meant to be generated in seconds. It is meant to be felt.

There will, and should, be an intersection between human creativity and machine capability. But that collaboration must be ethical. There is a fine line between inspiration and appropriation, between honoring years of discipline and compressing it into an instant for convenience, often at the cost of environmental and emotional degradation.

We cannot stop the tide of technology. But we can appeal to your awareness, your empathy, and your conscience. Artists are still here, still creating, still giving. Let us not forget to value them, not just for the art they make, but for the humanity they bring to it.



FROM THE EDITORS' DESK



This year's edition of the magazine, amongst many different things, had one primary aim: to capture the indomitable spirit of LSR and the lives of its many inhabitants. We are proud to see it stand as an institutional record, an archive that offers a glimpse into what people are thinking, feeling, and talking about. We carry stories worth telling—of identity, of uncertainty, of resilience. Through this edition, we want to create space for every thought that stirs, and every question that lingers. We hope it serves as a mosaic of not just our realities, but also the lived experiences of the people around us.

We felt it was pertinent for the magazine to reflect its time—to be inclusive of the conversations taking place in college, and to serve as an invitation into the lives of students in 2024. And maybe, just maybe, it's that one thing that brings us all together—something we can all share. An institution that has published and shared its platform with women since the 1950s, and one we're simply grateful to be a part of.

That is why, this year, we chose not to restrict ourselves to a singular theme. While the idea may have initially seemed too vast to execute, we believe that every second poured into this document has made it not only possible but meaningful. All four of us truly believed in fostering a community that understands the diversity of perspectives and realities that exist not only within these walls but also in the world outside.

Although the magnanimity of a themeless, boundless magazine edition may seem burdensome, the idea of it is simply freeing and empowering. In a world that often demands labels and neatly packaged topics, with the magazine this year, we decided to take a revolutionary detour. By discarding the usual constraints, we tried to encourage our writers, artists, and thinkers to dive headfirst into the chaotic beauty of ideas without a predefined blueprint. Think of it as an intellectual free-for-all, where the unexpected is celebrated. Consider this magazine the academic equivalent of a potluck dinner: you never know what peculiar dish you'll encounter, but that's what makes the feast so exciting and unpredictable.

To all our dear readers, when you are flipping through these pages that are as unpredictable and diverse as your favourite playlists—each piece a unique track meant to inspire, provoke thought, or simply make you smile when you need a break from the daily grind—we hope that the macrocosmic experience is captivating. We’ve designed this magazine with your experience at heart, hoping that each page turn feels like embarking on a mini-adventure, where laughter, intensity and insight often share the same space. Ten years from now, when we are dispersed in different parts of the world, I hope you can look back at this edition and for a moment, find yourself slipping into a kaleidoscopic state of mind, one with a reflection of the myriad moments of college, life, and politics.

This year, we are happy to see the student body play an instrumental role in upholding the rich linguistic diversity of this institution. We have also incorporated a QR code that leads to the audio recordings of the written version, to make the edition more accessible.

We would also like to thank our Staff Advisors– Dr Jonathan Koshy Varghese, Dr Kanchan Verma and Ms. Sheetal Yadav and for guiding us every step of the way. Your patience, understanding and wisdom have been instrumental in the becoming of this magazine. You have been a constant pillar of support and guidance for us throughout our tenure. We are immensely grateful to you for accommodating our every query and request. We will carry what we have learned forward in life.

A big shoutout to our entire magazine team across all 4 branches: editorial, web, design, and photography; cheers for surviving a hundred drafts, a thousand submissions, and more last-minute “Eureka!” moments than we can count. The shared passion and persistence have turned chaos into something truly spectacular, proving through this edition that great art is born out of a delightful mix of madness and genius.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed in whatever way—this magazine wouldn’t be the same without you. Thank you for trusting us with your ideas and your time. It has truly been a labour of love: brainstorming sessions, endless hours spent editing and coordinating, the forging of new friendships, and a deepened love and respect for the many wonderful women who have made this institution what it is. We are immensely proud to see ourselves as part of that legacy.

***With love,
Editors-in-Chief 2024-25
Aishi Mitra
Anoushka Sinha
Vaidehi Krishnan
Vidushi Mohan***

STUDENT UNION'S NOTE



As we reach the end of this journey, we are reminded that leadership is never about titles, appearances, or recognition – it's about showing up. It's about the late-night calls troubleshooting a crisis, the moments of exhaustion that no one sees, and the victories that never make it to the spotlight but change everything.

Being in the Union meant carrying the weight of expectations – not just from the institution, but from every student who turned to us for answers, for support, for action. It meant standing firm when it was easier to step back, fighting battles that often felt invisible, and accepting that no matter how much we did, it would never feel like enough. But leadership was never about perfection – it was about persistence. It was about working for the hope of it all, not for applause, but for the belief that things can and should be better.

This year, we didn't just imagine change – we made it real. Project Bahubhashi continued breaking linguistic barriers, ensuring that every voice found space to be heard. Crossroads brought conversations that challenged and connected, bridging gaps between perspectives. SU Community made student engagement more structured, ensuring that initiatives weren't just ideas but actions. Tarang became a reflection of our times – a celebration of identity, resilience, and the unshakable spirit of our student body. Beyond these initiatives, we fought for what often goes unseen but matters just as much.

Safety was not a promise in words but in action – more surveillance, better-lit spaces, and a constant push for accountability. Infrastructure was not just about walls and chairs but about ensuring students could exist in spaces that supported them. From repairing classrooms to ensuring clean water and functional washrooms, we worked on the basics – because comfort should never be a privilege.

None of this was done alone. It was built on the voices that pushed, questioned, and refused to settle. To every student who engaged, critiqued, and believed – you were the force behind it all. To the faculty and administration, even in disagreement, we found common ground in the shared responsibility of shaping this institution's future.

As we step away, we know this work is unfinished – because real change never ends. To those who will take up this mantle next: lead with integrity, fight for more than what is easy, and never forget who you serve. Change doesn't happen in grand gestures – it happens in the persistence of the everyday.

This campus is yours. Take it forward.

With conviction and solidarity,
Students' Union 2024–25
Amishi, Bishakha, Pranjal & Anoushka

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE



Warm greetings to everyone!

LSR today stands for leadership, scholarship and reinvention. Our mission is to create an educational environment where we prepare the young women of today to be the trailblazers of tomorrow; to enable our diverse and polyvocal young learners to make choices that are as compassionate as they are smart, as wise as they are effective and as socially responsive as they are merit driven. Whether they choose to lead families, organizations, communities or nations, we envision a world where our students are forces of not just change, but progress.

We, as an institution have always had our roots firmly in the soil, even as our branches reach out to meet the sky. This has never been a source of dissonance for us and has always allowed us to be grounded firmly while flying high. It is my ardent hope and vision for the road ahead that we will continue to combine the best of our strengths, persevere towards our cherished goals and collectively build on our legacy of excellence and our special brand of 'magic of LSR'. One such endeavour that has consistently contributed to our 'magic', is the College Magazine. It stands as a testament to the democratic ethos that Lady Shri Ram College holds dear, capturing the spirit and vitality of the institution. Since its inception in 1956, the magazine has chronicled the evolving legacy of LSR, making it the earliest institutional record available in the public domain. It is a living archive of the intellectual, emotional, and political journeys of those who pass through its corridors, carrying the weight of voices—both quiet and bold—that go on to shape the world beyond these walls.

Each edition is shaped by our student editors, who act as the conscience of the college and, in many ways, of the nation. They capture the emotional and intellectual pulse of the year, gathering voices and stories from every corner of campus life. In recent years, the magazine has explored themes such as the dislocations of the pandemic, the filtered reality of life on Google Meet, and the evolving meanings of love in a world increasingly defined by its limits.

This year, the magazine foregrounds dissent, reimagining, and becoming. It amplifies diverse voices through feminist, queer, and decolonial thought, resisting the flattening forces of conformity and commodification. Rooted in the textures of everyday life, it moves through love and loss, labour and longing, gathering the quiet rebellions and fleeting visions that shape who we are and who we might yet become.

Let us all continue to appreciate the learnings of our past and our eyes set on a better tomorrow for people and the planet. Let us together continue to push the boundaries of knowledge, nurture critical enquiry, foster democratic partnerships, and build an empowered community.

Prof. Kanika K. Ahuja
Acting Principal
Lady Shri Ram College for Women

PRINCIPAL'S



Retirement



A DECADE OF SERVICE

NOTES FROM FACULTY



It is said that planting of trees is a selfless act. After countless hours of toiling in the sun, the gardener is seldom the one that reaps returns from the earth. Yet, you've planted—carefully, lovingly, painstakingly.

For this investment of faith into the future, for your constant care of the disenfranchised, for watching over this sacred space in times of great tumult, for your love of all creatures great and small— you will be remembered by the LSR community for all times to come.

Thank you ma'am, and heartiest good wishes for the many glorious milestones that await you.

Dr. Priyanka Padhy,
Assistant Professors,
Department of Psychology

Much like a gardener nurturing each seed with patience and dedication, Prof. Sharma, a compassionate leader, has sown the seeds of growth that continue to thrive long after her retirement. With deep gratitude, we honour the enduring legacy she has created, a testament to the lasting impact of her care and vision.

Dr. Sridhi Dash
Assistant Professor
Department of English

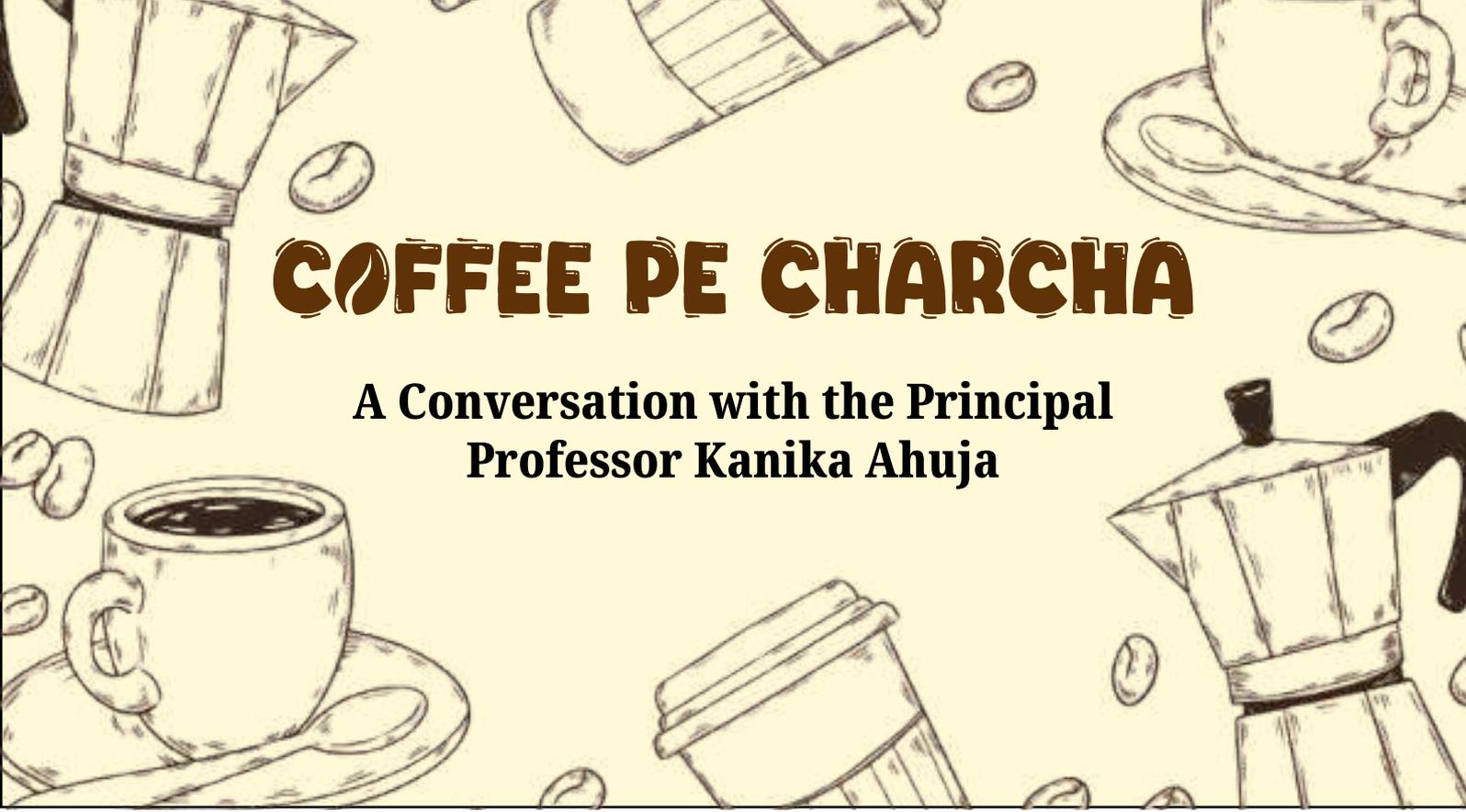
सुकृत्यों के बीहड़ पथ पर
अविचल अनथक चलते रहना,

शुभ संकल्पों का प्रकाश ले
दीपक बन जलते रहना,
जीवन के झंझावातों में
अम्लान सुमन से खिलते रहना,
स्नेहिल सरस सुमधुर भावों के
स्रोत लिए मिलते रहना।

आदरणीय प्रोफ़ेसर सुमन शर्मा के लिए स्नेह व
शुभकामनाओं सहित।

-प्रीति प्रजापति
Prof, Hindi Department





COFFEE PE CHARCHA

A Conversation with the Principal Professor Kanika Ahuja

On an unwitting Wednesday in April, a few members of the magazine team — the Editors-in-Chief, the heads of the design team, and the photography team sat down with the college Principal, Professor Kanika Ahuja. Over chilled glasses of cold coffee and a packet of juice or two, we got to talking, with the conversation ranging from dimensions of the college legacy and journey throughout the years, to modern concerns of the advent of AI and technology and its intermingling with the Indian education landscape.

They say that you can't step into the same river twice—but Professor Ahuja is living proof that you can. A proud alumna turned student and now principal, she reflected on her journey at LSR and discussed the shifting currents with a rare blend of nostalgia, audacity, and a vision that feels both revolutionary and comfortably familiar. Echoing the ethos of the late Sir Shri Ram, she reiterated the vision of LSR, 'More education. More education for Women. And more education for more women.' It's a mantra she has cited often, but never so pointedly as when the conversation steered towards discussing the trailblazing legacy left behind by the many great women who have sat in the principal's chair, and especially when the legacy of Mrs. Dastoor, the first principal, came into discussion.

Nostalgic anecdotes surfaced from the 90s at LSR, epochs of an era when sending your daughter alone to Delhi to study was as daring as boarding a rocket to the moon. The discussion was fast-forwarded to today: where conservative parental eyebrows have raised and

fallen in equal measure, as families grow comfortable entrusting their daughters to LSR's tutelage. And that trust hasn't been taken lightly. We discussed how more and more women of our college today have gained agency on this academic journey, and continue to "speak up," even if their voices tremble at first. Because at LSR, every voice, once unleashed, becomes part of a chorus too powerful to ignore — and we took this time to reflect on the many impressive things that the LSR team has achieved; be it in moments of cultural and intellectual gatherings like Tarang or departmental academic conferences, or be it in the form of bureaucratic and leadership positions. Kanika Ma'am shared her own definition of what LSR stands for today: Leadership, Scholarship, and Reinvention. In an age of the new National Education Policy 2020, shifting political landscapes, and capricious economic markets, LSR must constantly reinvent or risk becoming a relic. That reinvention, she discussed, must position LSR at the vanguard of liberal arts education in India — humanities not as an afterthought, but as the beating heart of a curriculum that embraces AI and technology without surrendering its soul. She advocated for the concept of adaptive learning, discussing how algorithms could customize a lesson plan, but only critical thinking and creativity could teach a student to question the algorithm itself. The conversation then veered to how, in this context, the LSR College Magazine becomes more than a student publication—it becomes a laboratory of ideas. From its ink-smudged first issue to its sleek digital editions, the Magazine has chronicled the evolution of young minds grappling

with everything from existential angst to global crises.

While drawing from her academic and professional endeavors, Kanika Ma'am remained delightfully grounded as she shared anecdotes of her own childhood obsession with chalkboards, of how she'd transform her bedroom walls into lesson plans for imaginary pupils. "Teaching found me early," she laughed — though, judging by the gleam in her eye, perhaps it was the other way around. In a witty quip, she talked about how much she missed actively engaging in teaching and research work, and how sometimes, that's all she could think of while engaging in her daily administrative tasks. She talked fondly of her students, and in a heartfelt remark, insisted that it's that infectious passion of her students that keeps teachers like her "passionate." She talked about the surreality and the "magic" in teaching at, and now leading the same institution where she had studied for so long.

The dialogue came to an end quicker than what our hearts desired — with an exchange of perspectives from everyone at the table regarding what made LSR, and consequently, made the LSR College Magazine. And by the end of this delightful discussion, the verdict was clear — that the institution's greatest assets are not its buildings or its rankings, but its people — and this same belief fosters the educational ecosystem in LSR, empowering yesterday's, today's and tomorrow's women to excel and innovate.

Written by: Aishi Mitra, English Department, III Year



CLOSING CHAPTERS

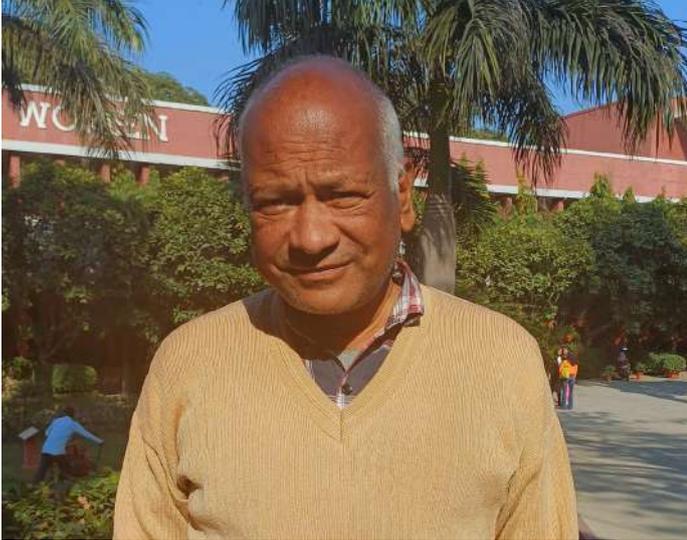
RETIRING STAFF

Interviews



Artwork By: Shambhavi Sharma, Journalism, III Year ; Khushi Joshi, Psychology, II Year ; Asmi Chawla, Economics, II Year

In Conversation With Sh. Deepak Singh



The College Magazine Team interviewed Sh. Deepak Singh, who has spent a large portion of his life looking after the college's security. He engaged in conversation with us and reflected on his journey here.

Here are the edited excerpts from the interview

When did you first join LSR?

I first joined LSR in August 1987. My father used to work here before me, and later, I took over. I have been here since childhood. We used to live in Zamrudpur in a rented flat, and then we shifted here. I grew up here alongside my siblings.

Do you remember if anyone joined work alongside you? Do they still work here?

Some people in the admin joined alongside me such as Sailesh sir and Vikram sir. There was a gap of just one or two years between our joining. Some have already retired. They are all very cooperative.

What was your first day like?

My first day was very nice. I remember I had night duty that day. At first, you don't know how to do the day duty, so they give you the night duty.

Were you always at the front gate?

Yes, earlier there was no back gate. That was made only with the construction of the metro. Back then there

were only five permanent guards. However, as the new vacancies opened up, more and more people joined on a contractual basis.

How was LSR earlier as compared to now?

LSR has always been great. The people here have always been like family to me. It still is, as students here continue to succeed.

Do you remember any memorable interactions with the students?

There weren't many interactions. We just checked the ID cards and let the kids go. If we stopped the kids, they would make some requests—they're kids, after all. LSR has always been strict with ID cards. The students sometimes make the excuse that they left the ID card at their homes. Rokna-tokna to meri duty hai, to rokto-tokte to hain hi.

What is a regular day like for you?

Just checking the ID cards, the gate passes, checking anything that comes and goes. We have a lot of help now. The fest season is nice. In Tarang, they assign some extra duties to us.

What was the best and most challenging part of this experience?

The best part- not as such...it's everything! There is nothing very challenging, the people in the admin are very cooperative. If there is any problem we'll let them know and they'll solve it in two minutes.

Do you have any specific retirement plans?

Not as such, all my kids are settled. We're from Nepal and my eldest is settled there, while my youngest lives in Hyderabad. I keep visiting them.

Will you miss coming here?

Yes, you can't let go of anything like that, can you? It's been so many years, but in my experience, a person learns to let go with time. The beginning is much harder.

Interviewed by: Anushka Jain, Political Science, I Year

Yashika Jain, English, I Year

Edited by: Vidushi Mohan, Economics, III Year

In Conversation With Sh. Gagan Singh



The College Magazine team interviewed Sh. Gagan Singh who retired after dedicating over four decades to LSR. There to witness the shift from traditional to digital resources, Sh Gagan Singh graciously shared his insights and the wisdom he has accumulated working at the library for over 4 decades.

When did you first start your journey at LSR?

I joined LSR College on November 07, 1983, and will retire on June 30, 2025, with the service of around 41 years and 08 months.

How would you describe your work for the LSR library over the years?

My experience at the LSR library has truly been wonderful. The students have been the best part—they are a pleasure to interact with. Even without having a formal higher education in this field, I have had the opportunity to guide students by offering tips on study materials. This experience has been shaped by the students, as they approached me with their academic needs, I, too, continued to learn and expand my knowledge. Every student's requirement has, in turn, contributed to my learning and growth, due to the consideration of others' needs as my own needs.

What was your experience in LSR like? Any memorable incidents that took place?

My time at LSR has been deeply meaningful. As many people have worked in this role before me, I took the initiative to analyze aspects and implement changes. Perhaps that's why students seek my guidance, and in turn, I've changed as well. I believe providing a service doesn't make one superior—good service is simply duty. Even social work isn't free; it holds value. This mindset drove me to learn everything about the library, from every book to individual chapters. That belief gave me knowledge, purpose, and strength to fight illness. Even students here have been a source of moral support, and for that, I'm truly grateful.

Do you have any special memories with your colleagues?

When it comes to memories with colleagues, one stands out, particularly during my health struggles. I owe a great deal to our former librarian, Mrs. Sharada Diwan, who is no longer with us. She played a pivotal role in my life, offering tremendous support. When I first joined the college, she took me under her wing like a mother. During my health crisis, she stepped in and provided the support I needed, even more than my parents

at that time. She was there for me when my family couldn't be. From 1995 until now, I've been through numerous surgeries and medical procedures, and I will always remember how she stood by me through all of it. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr Meenakshi Gopinath—former Principal, Ms Nita Kapoor and the LSR community who heartily supported me when I was suffering from cancer in 1994. Especially the students who supported me during the toughest phase of my life and prayed for my good health. This led to a transformation of my thoughts, that I shall always give more than I get.

How has the library and the college changed over the years?

The biggest change in the library has been the shift from physical to digital resources. In the past, each book had only one copy, used by one student at a time. Photocopying wasn't an option, and the college photocopy shop arrived only in the 90s. When books were issued, lines stretched to the stairs. My colleague and I were so busy we couldn't even drink water. Today, while our workload is lighter, the library's value has diminished. Earlier, students had to study here, but now, if a book takes more than a few minutes to find, they say, "Never mind, everything is online."

Earlier if a book wasn't available, we would inform students where to find it or update them on its status. If another student had it, inquiries and complaints were common. We also had a reservation system—at 10 AM, students wrote their names to reserve books, which they picked up at 2:30 PM. Managing over 100 reservations was a huge task. Only those who waited in line got books. Today, everything is streamlined. Students no longer need to ask staff—the system provides book status directly.

Do you have any messages for the students of LSR?

My advice is to maintain a balance between digital and traditional learning resources. While technology offers convenience, relying solely on digital platforms can hinder critical thinking. Printed materials and books provide depth and retention that digital content often lacks.

Excessive screen time has its drawbacks—it can lead to issues such as weakened eyesight, posture problems, and reduced attention span. A mindful approach to learning ensures a more comprehensive and healthier educational experience.

What are your plans after retirement?

I will continue to prioritise my health. I maintain a disciplined routine that includes morning exercise, and a balanced diet. I follow a structured health plan and know about physiotherapy. Additionally, I incorporate Ayurvedic principles into my lifestyle.

My driving force has always been commitment to my work, even in challenging circumstances. My journey has been shaped by persistence and discipline, reinforcing my belief that well-being and professional dedication go hand in hand.

What aspect of your work at LSR are you going to miss the most?

I believe that even in difficult times, there is something to appreciate. But somewhere in the corner of my heart, I will always miss the opportunity to enhance my skills and learnings through what I have learned from LSR and the students here.

If you had to sum up your journey at LSR in one sentence, what would it be?

I still remember when I first arrived in Delhi—I was completely unfamiliar with the city. Coming straight from Himachal Pradesh, I had never even travelled by train before. That was in 1983. Today, I may not have read every book cover to cover, but I have absorbed their essence. Everything I have learned, I owe it to the library.

Interviewed by: Disha Dahiya, History, II Year

Jasmeh Kaur, Journalism, I Year

Edited by: Baibhabi Hazra, History Department, II Year

In Conversation With Sh. Zuber Khan

Sh. Zuber Khan has been a steadfast presence at LSR Lawns for the past 35 years, tending to the campus grounds with unwavering dedication and skill. His calm demeanor, tireless work ethic, and quiet pride in his craft have made him a cherished member of the LSR community. As he steps into a new chapter, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for his years of service and wish him all the best for the future.

How long have you worked at the college?

I have been working for the last 35 years with this institution.

Do you have a favorite spot on campus that you worked on or feel proud of?

The Back lawns, because I have worked here in these lawns and have made lots of changes here. I have planted many things there.

Do you have a favorite season for gardening? Why?

Winter season is the best. Summers are harsh, it is quite a difficult season for gardening.

Can you recall a specific day at work that you will never forget?

Every day is special for me. I do not have any specific special day or event. Every day, I think of doing something new to the gardens, and it excites me.

What is the first thing you plan to do after retirement?

I would try to continue the same work post-retirement as well. Gardening can be done anywhere, be it here or in the village. I would like to plant more and more trees and grow them.

Do you have any advice for the person who will take over your work after you retire?

The people should beautify the garden and continue this work. They should also try to increase the plantation and maintain the garden. Learn to love what you have to do.

Have you seen any major changes in the campus gardens over the years?

There were no lawns here on the campus 35 years ago.



Then we slowly made the lawns. 10 years prior, when the new building was being constructed, a lot of mud was being excavated from the ground. That mud had to be moved away from the site. I requested the Principal ma'am to give away this mud to me so that I could make use of it in the garden. Then I piled up the mud to make various small hillocks in the lawns. Around 100 trucks of mud were being excavated and I used it all in the garden. It was one of the biggest changes in the gardens.

Which plant or tree on campus has been here the longest?

The Neem trees in the back area. Some have even dried up! (Pause) Can you see the coconut trees over here? They are the only ones on campus and can rarely be seen in Delhi.

If you could leave a message for the students/colleagues of LSR, what would it be?

Everyone here was nice. The principal ma'am and also the garden in-charge, Anjali ma'am. They were really nice. I never faced any difficulty. For the students, they were also very cooperative. When we tell them not to enter the gardens during winter, they listen to us. We feel bad about it but what can be done? No flowers will

feel bad about it but what can be done? No flowers will be left if everyone comes into the gardens. We also try that the flower show happens as soon as possible and we can free the gardens for the students to enter. It's necessary but we still feel bad for not letting the kids sit on the lawns in winter. This year, for instance, we *opened the lawns very early, in February itself, so that was nice.*

Last question, how did you feel on your very first day working here, and how do you feel now as you prepare to leave?

I consider my first day and last day to be the same because nothing has changed in my way of thinking over the years. I loved it just as much then as I love it now.

Interviewed by: Yoganjana Singh, English, II Year

Jiya Pahade, Journalism, I Year

Edited by: Aishi Mitra, English, III Year



Interview With Sh. Ram Ajor



Sh. Ram Ajor has been the heart and hands behind LSR lawns' lush, vibrant gardens since joining us in 1984. Over four decades, Ram's meticulous care—from early morning pruning to expertly timed plantings—has transformed our grounds into a year-round showcase of color and texture. As he hangs up his shears this spring, we celebrate Ram ji's remarkable legacy and wish him a well-earned, joy-filled retirement.

**How long have you worked at the college?
I have been working here since 1984.**

Do you have a favourite spot on campus that you personally on or feel proud of ?

I have always worked as per my duties. As in, I have worked to fulfill the duties I was assigned the way I joined the Gardeners' Department. Initially, I would work wherever I was asked to. So, I have worked all around the college- café lawns, back lawns, even in the nursery. I have worked everywhere. Thereafter, I chose to work in the front lawns after (Principal) Madam gave me a tour of this area. I decided this is where I would work and not move to any other place.

**Do you have a favourite season for gardening?
Why ?**

The preparation for our Annual Flower Show usually

starts around October to December. So, we prepare the lawns for the show. So, we do not allow you (students) to sit on the lawns from January to February. This is because when you sit and pluck the manicured grass, or walk or jump on it, the grass gets damaged- even if we water it daily. The beauty that you see in our lawns is possible because of this prohibition. So, this is my favourite season to work in preparing and decorating the lawns for the flower show. And when the flowers and lawns get ready, you see their beauty yourself.

Can you recall a specific day at work that you will never forget ?

The thing is, my main occupation is farming. Since we were a family of farmers in our village, we chose the job of gardening when we moved here. My father used to work here when the college was being constructed. When I took over for him, I was unofficially employed for the gardening job on daily wages by the previous Principal. After two years, my job here became permanent.

What is the first thing that you plan to do after retirement ?

I do not have a specific plan as of yet. I do not intend to move someplace new. I have a home in my village and in Ludhiana. I have seen enough of the city. I was very young when I moved to Delhi. I have been coming to the college since 1978. I have seen enough of Delhi. So, I am thinking of moving back to my village, to my home, and live with my children and daughter-in-law. I need to get my younger daughter married in Ludhiana. I plan to fix her marriage, clear my rents and settle in my village.

Do you wish to continue gardening at your home after retirement ?

If God gives me the strength, I certainly plan to continue it since farming is all that I have. If I am unable to continue, my children shall. They have grown up, so I shall live with them peacefully.

What will you miss the most about working at LSR ?

I will certainly miss this college. I have been here since 1984, so I cannot NOT miss this place- the daily rou-

tine of getting ready for my duty every morning, then returning home in the evening. For most years, I have seen the same things– students come to the college, bringing with them a lot of hustle and bustle, there are staff members, some speak nicely, some are rude. My life at home is a monotony– prepare and eat food, go to sleep, then rush for duty in the morning. So, I will certainly miss this routine life.

But I find solace in the fact that I may miss this college a little less when I move to live with my family in our village.

If you could describe your time at LSR in one sentence, what would it be ?

All the years that I have worked here, my work has included sowing seeds, transferring the newly growing plants, getting seeds from the flowers when they bloom and drying them. Then, we check which seeds have become ready for sowing. Although it is my last year, I am trying to teach this to my son.

How did you feel on your very first day working here, how do you feel now as you prepare to leave ?

I certainly felt nice on my first day. I was happy that I had gotten a job and would not have to wander around looking for one. It always felt nice to be around the hustle and bustle of students. Sometimes, students come to sit on the lawns when they are closed, so we have to scold them. Some are stubborn and ask the reasons, but I just tell them to go talk to Principal madam. But I

enjoyed my time here. By God's Grace, I have gotten everything now. I came here empty-handed, but God has bestowed me with everything now. I have a plot in Delhi and our own house in Ludhiana. So, now, when I am about to leave, I am happy and satisfied.

One day, everybody has to leave. Lalaji gave us this job and to so many others. If Lalaji had not given me this job, you would not be interviewing me right now.

If you could leave a message for the students of LSR, what would it be ?

My message to the students is to study hard with utmost dedication, get good jobs and make LSR proud. And my message to our gardens is the hope that Whoever comes here to work should think that he has got a job here – so he should work with full dedication. One should not think that 'Forget it, I have got a job, so why do I need to work, I am getting salary anyway.'

Now see, it is my end – but still I come and work every day early in the morning. When it gets sunny, I stop my work. Whatever work is to be done, I do it routinely, coming in at 7 in the morning and finishing it by 9–10 o'clock. So my message to everyone is to do your job sincerely– the same sincerity and dedication with which our college has been winning the Green for the past 17–18 years.

*Interviewed By: Lavanya Yadav, Psychology, I Year
Jasmeh Kaur, Journalism, I Year
Edited By: Yashodhara Ranjan, Political Science,
III Year*

In Conversation With Sh. Udham Singh



The College Magazine Team interviewed Sh. Deepak Udham Singh has been the beloved cook at the LSR Hostel for decades, serving up warm, comforting meals and even warmer smiles. Whether it was a festive feast or a simple dal-chawal on a rainy evening, Udham ji's cooking carried the unmistakable taste of care. As he bids farewell to the kitchen he's long called his own, we thank him for the countless meals and memories, and wish him a peaceful retirement.

How long have you been working at LSR? How much has college changed since then?

I joined LSR in 1991 and became a permanent member in 1992. I've been serving here for 34 years, and I'll be retiring this May. I remember Khosla ma'am, the superintendent of the kitchen. She kept the kitchen running. The girls used to be so happy. Even after graduating, girls would come back to meet us. Some came all the way from Bombay and Kolkata just to meet the Warden. The girls used to be very comfortable here. The arrangements for their food and their stay were top-notch. Students from distant places aspired to study at LSR. Those who couldn't get in often regretted it. Those who couldn't secure an admission here would regret it. So many eminent personalities have studied at our college. Our college would set the standard but since the COVID-19 pandemic, the quality has unfortunately declined. The hostel is the heart of the college, the dil. That's how it used to be. But it's been almost 4-5 years since the pandemic, and the hostel hasn't functioned

fully since. It reopened for a year after COVID-19, but as I mentioned earlier, an unfortunate accident occurred in one of the bathrooms, which then went viral online.

Did you first join the hostel staff as a cook? What kind of dishes did you make? What was popular among the students?

I used to work at a 5-star hotel before I joined LSR. I worked at the Hans Plaza in Connaught Place. I applied here because there was a vacancy and I got selected. The staff here was very good and we prepared all kinds of dishes. The karamchari staff used to make great food. All the officers, the Principal, were good people. But now, things have changed. With the government introducing contracts and daily wages, it's not the same anymore. Now that the karamcharis are retiring, their replacements are working on a contractual basis.

Do you remember your first day as the hostel cook? What would you tell yourself, if you could speak to yourself that day when you joined the college?

Yes, I remember of course! I would not say much, just "Be on good terms with everyone, do your work sincerely, and stay out of unnecessary matters."

What memories do you have with the students?

Earlier, the students were really good. Nowadays we get to have no interaction with them. We used to have "bada khana" and "badi tea" but now everything has changed. Some of those former students now have daughters studying at LSR!

What is your plan after retirement?

I have two sons and they have their own businesses. I'll be moving to Dehradun to help them out.

Any final words for the students?

Do good, study well, and make your parents proud. You can achieve anything. Choose your path and *pursue it with honesty.*

*Interviewed by: Yashika Jain, English, I Year
Vasudha Sharma, Journalism, II Year
Edited by: Annesha Mistry, English, III Year*

In Conversation With Dr. Maninder Duggal



I've always been clear I wanted to do commerce. I didn't like maths or science, so I chose commerce, which was a new subject then. I'm from the first batch of B.Com at LSR. SRCC was an option, but I chose LSR. That name carried weight. Wherever I went even for my PhD interviews being from LSR opened doors.

Over the years, are there any significant changes you've noticed in LSR, from your time as a student to now as a professor?

From the students' side, values have changed. Earlier, there was more respect toward teachers. I always tell my students if you can't respect your teacher, you can't respect your mother, mother-in-law, or boss. That sense of "Guru" has faded. I encourage students to acknowledge every teacher, even with a simple smile.

As a senior professor, I often tell the younger faculty, "Take care of LSR like it's your home." I've been heading exams for 12–13 years now, and there's a strong sense of belonging. I hope the new faculty imbibes this spirit too.

You have been a professor and you have been a student at this institution for so long. How has your experience been in teaching at your alma mater? Is there a particular incident that encouraged you, as a student, to return to LSR as a professor?

As a child, when asked what I wanted to become, my answer was always "a professor." That was my focus, my target, and I achieved it. In 1976, when I got my 11th result, I was living in New Rajendra Nagar. LSR was far, but it had a reputation "if you get into LSR, you'll get a job." My friends encouraged me to apply. I was a shy girl from St. Thomas' but once I came to LSR, there was no looking back. I went on to do my M.Com from DSE, where I was the second topper. One day, I got a message that Dr. Ruthra, the then Principal, wanted to see me. She said, "Maninder, you are coming back. All LSR students come back." And I did. After my M.Com finals in 1979, I was interviewed here and joined as a professor. I did my MPhil and PhD alongside.

How were you so sure about your field?

What do you believe were the core foundational values of LSR?

LSR has always balanced academics with extracurriculars. Back then, we had festivals too, and I'd stay at a friend's house just to attend functions. This kind of engagement shapes personality. I tell students don't just study, participate! The college experience is not just classes. I missed out on many activities myself because I was eager to rush home after class, and I regret that. LSR gives you exposure, opportunities, and an environment that nurtures growth.

You've been very actively involved in college activities and societies, especially projects...

As a professor, yes. I was heading Enactus, which I started at LSR. Dr. Gopinath once asked me if there was any activity I'd like to lead, and I chose Enactus because it aligned with entrepreneurship. We had the Palak Project, where we grew spinach organically in unused campus spaces. The students and maalis were

both involved. The spinach was sold and people loved the taste. The project had to stop due to money management politics, but the intention was always to help.

We also did vertical gardening, used elephant dung to make paper, and supported weavers from Varanasi by bringing them to Delhi to sell their products. The students even helped Patiala salwar tailors from Punjab set up Instagram pages for marketing.

How has being a mentor at Enactus changed you as a person and a teacher?

It made me more emotionally aware. Commerce talks of profit, but I always told students—profit must be socially responsible. Enactus let me see that in action. Whether it was weavers, farmers, or tailors, we used our networks and intelligence to empower others. That was meaningful.

Did teaching commerce in a liberal arts, women’s institution change your pedagogy or let you engage with other disciplines?

In areas like human resource management or marketing, definitely. I invited public speakers and industrialists, which enhanced exposure. Students became more confident, more technologically advanced. They organized festivals better, coordinated with top-shot guests. It was a pleasure to see them evolve.

You’ve seen the transition in education. What are your views on NEP and its impact?

Personally, I preferred the annual system it allowed for in-depth learning. The semester system is rushed. But NEP’s additional electives are interesting. Courses like “The Art of Being Happy” or community engagement are important. Vocational sensitivity is also needed. If students enjoy the subjects, then I’m okay with it.

Is there something from the older system you’d like to borrow and incorporate now?

Educational tours. I used to teach Indian Economics and took students to Nainital to study small-scale industries like candle-making. I took them to Panth Agriculture University for farming-based projects. Under the semester system, this kind of immersion is difficult due to time constraints. I hope younger teachers take it up it’s worth the effort.

A lot of people now incorporate e-learning to

make learning more interactive. What are your views on this change?

The world is getting smaller and more connected, so we must adapt. But I personally find too much screen time exhausting. Sometimes, less knowledge is better than overwhelming yourself with too much and not knowing what’s right.

What’s the first thing you plan to do after retirement?

Retirement only means I’m leaving the teaching job. I still want to work. My husband’s factory needs attention, so I might turn entrepreneur. I’m also spiritually inclined. I’ve written a book that’s being published soon ‘Sikh Spirituality,’ based on verses from the Guru Granth Sahib. These verses gave me strength. The photographs are original, clicked by my brother. My aim is to share peace and beauty. It’s my second book, and I hope non-Sikhs read it too. Sikhism hasn’t been understood well it’s not about rituals, but strength, spirit, one God.

Any particular spiritual experience that’s stayed with you?

Many. I once wanted to take revenge, but after listening to a kirtan, I felt peace. And things resolved on their own. When my son was unwell, I started waking up early to read the scriptures, even if I felt sleepy. I saw changes over time. There’s a verse “He can make a carnivore eat grass” that gave me hope for change. And I did see people change. All you need is faith.

Any recent moment of spiritual connection that you’d like to share?

Just a few weeks ago, I told my son I wanted to buy a jacket with a hood “in case it rains.” It hadn’t rained in days. But the next day, it poured. My son said, “Mama, kamaal ho gaya.” I laughed. It’s not a miracle, but a reminder you start becoming aware of your thoughts. The universe listens.

Is there a particular verse that has stuck with you through difficult times?

Yes today’s Hukamnama from the Golden Temple.

“Taanko tokha kaha beya pe jaanko odh tohari Har bisrat sada khowari.”

It means if you’re under divine protection, how can

you be deceived or troubled? And if you forget God, you'll suffer. That has stayed with me.

What's your favorite spot in college?

The lawns. The greenery.

If you were to choose one classroom interaction you'll always fondly look back on, what would it be?

Business Law. I taught the entire paper with passion. My son, who isn't fond of studying, said, "Mama, your teaching is kamaal. I studied for 20 days and passed with 60%." It's in my blood.

If there is one book that you think all students should read?

Mine because it's spiritual. But otherwise, whatever you're doing, do it with full passion. Also, build a friendship with the force call it God or anything else, but connect with it.

What advice would you like to give to the students of LSR?

I love you. You're beautiful. If you think I'm young, you're the reason. Love your college. Don't think of it as your second home, it's your first. Take care of it. I've been here since 1979, and I've never once regretted it. Even after the holidays, I look forward to returning.

I especially cherish interactions with first-years. I see their homesickness and try to make them feel at home. I've told students, "I'm like your mother or sister, talk to me." It's not just teaching, it's nurturing a family. I've started a countdown to retirement, and students ask if I'll return. I tell them, "I'm nearby. I'll come back." Because I worry for them. I always have.

Interviewed by: Kaashvi Jaatrana, Psychology, IInd Year and Vasudha Sharma, Journalism, II Year
Edited by: Ami Kushwaha, Psychology, II Year

In Conversation With Dr. Shashi Bala Garg



For over four decades, Dr Shashi Bala Garg has been a pillar of the Economics Department at LSR. Her deep passion for the subject and unwavering commitment to excellence in every lecture has shaped countless batches of graduating students. She sat down with us and delved into economics, college and the times today.

Here are the edited excerpts from the interview:

What first sparked your interest in economics and set you on this path? Looking back, has your perspective on the subject changed over the years?

In those days, we did not have access to a lot of information. At every stage, I just thought about what interested me; and that is how I chose this field. We had three board exams: in fifth, eighth, and eleventh. All three years were tested together in eleventh. We used to have five subjects, and ironically, I ended up scoring the least in economics out of all my subjects! I was also interested in mathematics, so after my result, I came to this decision after a lot of discussion with my family. I was the first in my family to enter this profession and only the second woman to enter the job market. Initially, I joined a college close to home, but

later I joined IP College. There was never a concept of long-term planning as such—it was all a moment of serendipity.

Across your years of teaching, you must have encountered some unforgettable students. Does interacting with them now feel like a full-circle moment? Is there a particular student or classroom moment that stands out to you, whether because it was inspiring, funny, or just plain surprising?

It feels great to meet students I have taught in the past. Teaching for me has always been a two-way interaction—I have learned from my students as well. Wherever I go, I usually meet at least one or two LSR students who recognize me. Many of my students have excelled in different fields—some are professors at the Delhi School of Economics, some work at the World Bank, and others have made a mark in theatre, art, and painting.

One particularly memorable incident was when some students used to skip lectures. A senior colleague and I used to teach mathematics to different sections. My colleague was quite strict, so no one dared do so in her class. But one day, some students skipped all the classes.

The next day, we sat in the staff room where students could see us. They kept peeking inside, wondering why we weren't coming. Eventually, one student gathered the courage to ask why we weren't taking class. My colleague simply replied, "Today, we are doing the same."

When you look back at your academic journey, both as a professor and a student, which field of economics interests you the most?

I have always been interested in Microeconomics, Game Theory, Statistics, and Econometrics. These areas have always fascinated me, even though I haven't taught all of them at every level. My daughter has also studied economics, so we often discuss econometrics and economics with each other.

If you could go back in time and teach your first-ever economics class again, and give your younger self one piece of teaching advice, what would it be?

The initial years of teaching require a lot of hard work. Joining LSR is a privilege, and at the same time, teachers must work very hard. It's not just about covering the syllabus but about how you present it to keep students engaged and interested in the subject. In the initial few years, you have to constantly prepare before lectures to deliver them effectively, but as you teach the same subjects repeatedly, your understanding deepens. Even after 20 years, a student may ask an intelligent question that makes you think in a way you never did before.

Economics is a very rigorous discipline. Economic principles are not just used in the professional sphere; they apply to daily life as well. Even in general discussions, we often use economic terms. Concepts like opportunity cost help us make the best choices—not just in monetary matters but in other aspects of life. What is optimal differs from person to person, depending on their circumstances and preferences. These concepts become more refined when you study the subject. I often tell students that they cannot afford to make inefficient or suboptimal choices because they have been trained to think economically.

Teaching at an all-women's institution must have been a unique experience. How do you think the gender dynamic influenced classroom discussions, and do you believe it shaped the way your students engaged with economics compared to co-ed environments?

I have always been in all-women's institutions—school, college, and university. I don't see being in a

women's college as a disadvantage. Those who have studied in co-ed institutions might have a different perspective, but I don't think women's colleges lack anything.

Economics is not just about numbers and models—it is deeply connected to real-life events and human behaviour. Can you recall a moment when a major economic shift or crisis changed the way you taught a particular concept?

COVID-19 changed the way I teach. I never used online tools for teaching before the pandemic. I was comfortable with books. The shift to online classes during the pandemic was a big change. Using online tools turned out to be very efficient, especially for my subject, which involves complex diagrams. With digital tools, straight lines looked straight, and curves looked like proper curves. However, students also started relying more on technology—using ChatGPT, for example. While technology has made learning easier, I always emphasize that human intelligence must be stronger than technology. The real skill is learning, unlearning, and relearning—if students master that, they will always stay ahead.

Finally, as you step into retirement, what's one thing you hope your students will always remember—both about economics, and life?

Keep a positive outlook on life— and you will always find solutions to problems. Determination and willpower are key. I tell my students that even if they miss a lecture, they should make an effort to find out what happened in class. A teacher's lecture includes years of experience beyond what is in the book. Think from multiple angles and discuss things with your peers, and you will always find solutions. If no solution exists, you must muster the strength to be able to accept the situation.

*Interviewed and Edited by:
Pakhi Dhokariya, Political Science, II Year
Vidushi Mohan, Economics, III Year*

GENERATIONS

Identifying the offspring



What the generations are to you and me.
The foremost thought that comes to me are exorbitant stories.
Its a rank or a degree in genealogy– the family tree.
Its' also an age cohort born around a time,
Sharing history , relics, experiences and events like wars
And technologies and crisis , that shaped their formative years.
The collective identity that marks them who they are,
Sharing values, beliefs and behaviors, they are at par.

As I begin to wonder about the generations that I have seen and known
they are different yet similar...lets absorb and proceed slow
And gradually let the knowledge grow
I begin to think of generations as 4:

The First called The Silent Generation:

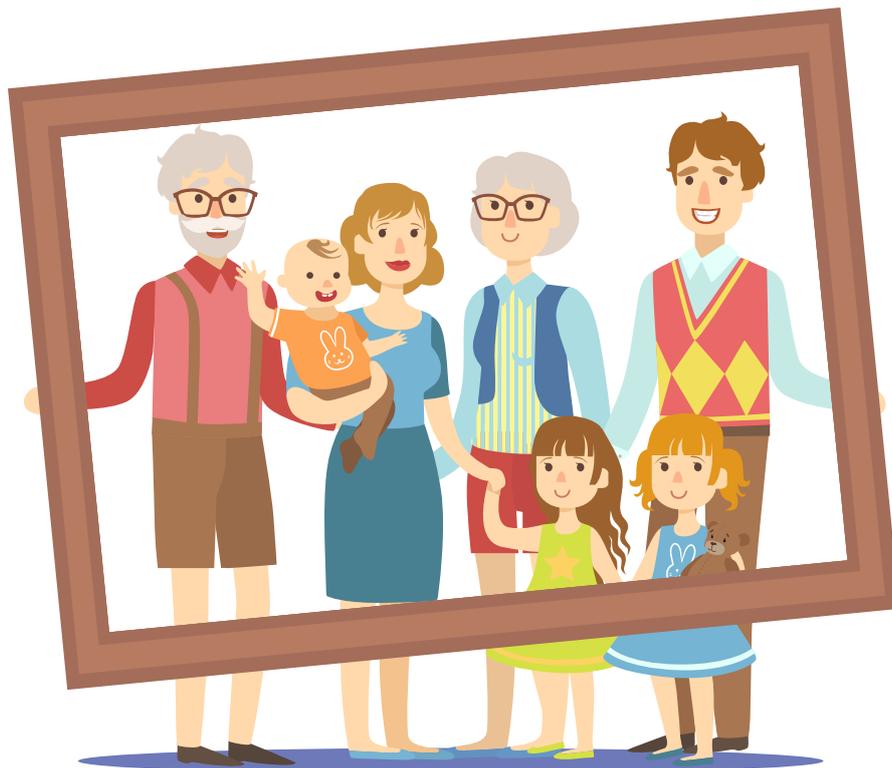
They were cautious, hardworking , conformists,
And were loyal to the core to the authority figures.
My Nani–
Or I will call her ‘The Old’ who now rests in peace– was indeed silent,
Powerless as she seemed.
Despite being skilled as a nurse , she functioned as a mellow second wife
And a mother –more to sons and less to daughters .
Though submissive but liked to converse and powerlessly scold in English.
Often told us tales of post independence era ironically she wasn’t liberated.
Now for some traits,
For Hedonism: She did nothing to please herself.
For Self Direction : She happily sought direction by her father, Husband and Sons.
Her Achievement: To educate her sons and not daughters and maintain the family pride,
Often she referred to her sons as “Bhaiya– demarking respect and servitude she held for them
And never she doubted her security be it financial or emotional to any.
I perceive her as a maiden dedicated to her duties,
Bearing the pain of a lost husband, and yet to others never revealed her deep ailments.

The Next Generation called “the Baby Boomers”–
In this Generation , women’s education was not a top notch priority,
They were often taught only enough to read and write letters
After which they would be wed.
Their destinies lied in hands of males and their intentions were somewhat sad.
Allured to get married,
In exchange of their voices and all that one could give ,
they got fancy clothes, the right to be fashionable
and the liberty to go around with their husband which didn’t happen much.
My Mother : I will call her “the Gold’ .
Yes the name Baby Boomers ..ohh she has 7 siblings
Definitely, family oriented yet pragmatic when the need be,
She has fought hard for us to get the equity,
the education that we flaunt and the multi–faced stability.
Her spine I think is the stainless steel .
And never any faltering does she feel.
For some traits:
For Hedonism: She eats up the newspaper, can blossom an arid land and cook and feed delicacies
For Self Direction: She did as directed but fearlessly took reins when the time arrived.
Her Achievements: Raising sons and daughters as equally successful.
Security: Pushy towards actions to create a haven
Power: I call her the power puff women.
Conformity: She is a mid!!
Benevolence: Though generally kind & can also be nasty to some who threaten her well– being.
For her, the routines are her cup of tea,
Self –belief is her super power and never can she be free.

Now The Third generation– The Bold– Millenials
Born in the information age and often called the ‘digital natives’
‘Our lock in’ purpose and meaning in work.
We prefer experiences over holdings.
And diverse niche soothes us.
A desire for constant feedback & if you remember,
the Sarah App for social validation is our thing.
Some traits: of Mine
Hedonism: Nature, conversations and flow drive me sane,
Self Direction : is the Default option
Achievement: being able to create a self sustained life.
Security: the more I have it, the more I crave for.
Power: power is an Illusion,
Conformity: I believe in not having the three P’s rule: No i phones; No photo shoots; no patriarchy.
Benevolence: Only to those who value it.

Now the Fourth generation– The yet to Unfold– Gen Z
The name Zoomer.. most racially diverse generation it is,
They are ultra high tech with information on their fingertips,
Reshaping and un gendering the world, be it workspaces and home,
Politically progressive , Z eers are consumed by the ecological disasters.
For some traits: My students
Hedonism: Vacations and ‘a perfect photo’
Self -Direction: “we will decide is their life’s motto”
Achievement : Inclusive for living and of all forms..
Conformity : they are out to reform social norms..
Security: Of Finances is a Top notch priority.
Power: I think they don’t like the hierarchy!!
Benevolence : No dearth of it.
With those who can express, there is much concern and warmth to see.
And there’s no need to hide beside the tree even if you don’t feel free.
To wind up, Generations new and old,
The silent, boomer,
millenials and zoomer
At times it all seems like a mindless struggle,
Often the generations network fix like,
The God’s prodigious gig saw puzzle.

Dr. Shiksha Deepak,
Assistant Professor
Department of Psychology



मेरी बेटी “युति”

मैंने कभी विनिर्दिष्टतः चाहा ही नहीं
कि मैं एक पुत्र का पिता बनूँ या एक पुत्री का
जब तुम्हारी माँ मातृत्व को अपने आँचल में समेटे समेटे
अपने गर्भ में तुमको पोष रही थी
तब से लेकर अब तक बस चाहा तो इतना सा
कि जो भी हो स्वस्थ हो स्वस्थ रहे
फिर पवित्र श्रावण मास के प्रथम दिवस ब्रह्म महूर्त में
तुमने माँ की प्रसव पीड़ा के माध्यम से अपने आने की आहट दी
मन जितना अधिक विचलित था उससे कहीं ज्यादा मजबूत था
साथ ही पिता बनने के विचार मात्र से ही भरपूर प्रफुल्लित था

फिर जब पहले पहर ने विदाई ली दूसरे पहर ने दस्तक दी
तुम्हारी माँ की पीड़ा असहनीय से अति असहनीय होने लगी
पर वो इस प्रयास में ही रही कि तुम्हें इस दुनिया में सकुशल ला
सके
मैं मजबूर था उसका दर्द बाँट नहीं सकता था
पर शायद मैं ही उसकी हिम्मत का श्रोत था

समंदर भर की पीड़ा के पश्चात् शीप में बना मोती चमकने वाला था
गर्वित, हर्षित, उल्लासित, आनंदित करने वाला पल बस आने
वाला था

तब तुमको मैंने देखा, सुना और धड़कनों को महसूस किया
तमाम विचार और सवाल के जबाव में तुम बस रोने लगीं
जैसे मुझसे कह रही हो कि पापा देखो मैं आ गई आपके पास

मन की खुशी पलकों के नाजुक बांध तोड़कर निष्कण्टक बहने लगी
सच कहूँ तो वो आंसू ऐसे लग रहे थे
जैसे गौमुखी का पावन जल हो
तुम्हारी माँ बहुत बहादुर, बेहद साहसी और अत्यंत मजबूत है
सच कहूँ तो मुझसे तो कई गुना ज्यादा

बहुत नन्हीं सी होने पर भी लगता है,
जैसे मन की बातों को महसूस कराती हो
मुझे पहचानती हो, जानती हो,
मेरी गोदी में आकर खुद को महफूज पाती हो
सीने में धड़कता है जो,
वो विज्ञान की दृष्टि में हृदय हो सकता है
किंतु तुम और तुम्हारी माँ ही मेरा वास्तविक हृदय हो।
हाँ, तुम दोनों ही मेरा वास्तविक हृदय हो।।

अभय भारद्वाज "अभि" (लेखा विभाग)





वैसे तो आज कुछ लिखने का मन नहीं

वैसे तो आज कुछ लिखने का मन नहीं,
कुछ कहने का मन नहीं।
मन की माला का इक इक मनका तुम्हारा नाम,
खुद पे अंकित कर बैठा है।

तुम्हें जो थोड़ी देर हो जाती है बात करने को,
तो लगता है, कि सब रूठा रूठा है।
जैसे बंजर भूमि पे तेरे एहसासों का कृषक,
इशक के बीज बो रहा हो,
तुम्हें देखने से लगता है कि ये प्रकृति का रूप,
मेरा होने को धीरज खो रहा हो।

व्याख्यान एक तरफ और असंख्य रूप एक तरफ,
एक तरफ तुम तो सारी प्रकृति एक तरफ।
जैसे दूर तलक हरी हरी लहलहाती फसल हो,
या सामने ही खिलते श्वेत रक्त वर्णी कमल हो।

जैसे कोकिल की मीठी मीठी सी कूक हो,
या घर की देहरी के अंतस में, दिन के ढल जाने की हूक हो।
जैसे दूर आसमान में,
जिस जगह लगता है कि वो धरती को चूम रहा है,
बस वहीं पर एक चांद कुछ तारों के साथ झूम रहा है।

इतने में तेरी याद और गहरी होती जाती है,
जैसे कोई नदी सागर में उतर जाती है।

तेरी तरह वो खूबसूरत शाम भी,
इन आंखों के सामने से गुजर जाती है,
और फिर से वही रात इन आंखों में समा जाती है।
जो सुबह होने तक तेरी याद के साथ साथ जगी रहती है,
ना जाने तेरे रूप की कितनी कहानी कहती है,
ना जाने तेरी रूप की कितनी कहानी कहती है।
चलो जाने दो,

वैसे भी आज कुछ लिखने का मन नहीं,
कुछ कहने का मन नहीं।



अभय भारद्वाज "अभि" (लेखा विभाग)

With His Excellency Ambassador of Turkey to India, Mr. Firat Sunel



Vidushi: How do you think your writing has evolved from when you first started? Also, when you write, do you have any rituals or habits that help in your creative process?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: I started writing very early. In fact, I wrote my first novel when I was in third grade. It was inspired by Robinson Crusoe. I call it my first so-called novel because, of course, I was only a child back then, and didn't know how to write one. But I completed this book. I remember taking a very thick notebook and writing it all by hand until I finished it. Many children start by writing novels or stories but they never finish them. But I completed it. Since then, it has always been my dream to become a novelist. Ever since I have learned to read and write, it has been a passion of mine.

Keeping diaries has also been a significant part of my journey—it's one of the best ways to evaluate your writing skills over time. But writing a novel is not an easy task. You must have inspiration but it is not enough. Your ideas and your pen, as I like to say, must be mature. You can't simply decide, I want to write a novel—and then start one. It doesn't work that way.

Developing your own literary style takes time. For example, even though I wrote my first "so-called novel" when I was in third grade, I did not consider myself a professional author until my 40s. For decades I felt that I had not developed my own style and that my ideas and pen were not mature enough. And one day you feel it. You wake up one day and realize—now I can write.

For the younger generations dreaming of becoming novelists, I would say that discipline is very important, and so is time management. Writing and reading regularly is essential. And don't rush! Readers want a good piece of work. They don't want to witness your development as a writer by reading a mediocre first book, a better second one, and a greater third. They want excellence from the start. That's why it's better to wait until you're confident in your work. If your first book is weak or immature, it might harm your reputation and your future work.

Aishi: We had the opportunity to go through your LinkedIn page, and we noticed some very interesting food fusions there. For example, pani-puri with Turkish hazelnut. We have already discussed how as a novelist and diplomat you have helped bridge the cultural gaps between India and Turkey. So in regards to that, what is your favorite fusion

food, if any?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: Fusion foods are good, but I love pure Indian food as well. I also cook Indian food at home because I love cooking. I even tried making panipuri once. It's a bit difficult, but I managed it. I even bake my own bread, chapati, and even naan—though it is harder to make than it looks.

I don't want to call it fusion, but when you ask my favorite food, it is golgappa or pani puri, dal and butter chicken. At my residence, we alternate between cooking Indian and Turkish dishes—three times a week for each. I love both cuisines. Food is such a beautiful way to connect people—not just from stomach to stomach, but from person to person as well.

Vidushi: What is your favorite Turkish idiom that has never been translated just right in other languages?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: There are so many funny ones! For example, if someone asks, How are you? and you reply, I'm just rolling, it doesn't literally mean rolling. It just means you're doing fine—everything's normal. But my favorite idiom? I'll have to think about that one. I might need to get back to you later.

Aishi: During your conversation here at the panel, you mentioned that diplomats are the nomads of the modern time. What advice would you have for students who find themselves in the same place as you are, standing at the crossroads of diplomacy, literature, and different cultures?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: My advice would be to stay close to all cultures. Read as much as you can—our panel topic today was translated literature, and that's crucial. You can't learn every language, but translated works help you transcend the boundaries. My advice for students would be: read, read, read.

Vidushi: You've expressed your fondness for Indian films in an article with The Indian express where you talked about Lal Singh Chadda. Are there other Indian films you are fond of?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: Absolutely! The Indian film industry is one of the most developed and famous ones in the world. Especially in the last few decades, I have been fascinated by the evolution in Bollywood movies. They are really high quality movies, and thanks to digital platforms, it is easy to access any Indian films. I am definitely a fan.

Vidushi: Do you find any similarities between Turkish and Indian cinema?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: Yes, that is why Turkish cinema and series are very famous in India and Indian Bollywood movies are also known and liked in Turkey. The similarities do not just lie in our cinema but also in our people and cultures. For example, Turkish films often depict close family bonds—the big family, not just the core family—sitting together at the dinner table, talking and sharing. That's very similar to Indian culture. When you see that, you associate yourself with Turkish culture because it resonates with your own. When you watch an American movie, you see a big family gathered only on Christmas or Thanksgiving. Another example is respect for elders. In Turkish films, you see young people showing respect to older generations, and this feels very natural to Indian audiences. Even small things, like inviting someone to eat instead of just saying “thank you” after they wish you bon appétit, are shared traditions. These cultural parallels make Turkish movies relatable to Indian audiences and vice versa.

Aishi: One last question; how do you strike the balance between being a diplomat and a novelist? How has being a diplomat influenced the way you write and perceive things and vice versa?

Ambassador Firat Sunel: This is a very important question and not an easy one. First, you have to reserve time for writing. Diplomats work 24/7, so it's hard to find time. But you have to make it. Balance, time management, and discipline are critical. Without these, you won't be able to accomplish anything. I get up early—at five a.m.—and dedicate three hours daily to writing. No phone calls, no interruptions. That adds up to twenty-one hours a week, which is like two extra work days just for writing. Diplomacy and literature are different but complementary. As diplomats, we're trained to use words carefully. That skill translates to writing as well. However, the styles are different. Diplomatic language is functional—it's not meant to be beautiful or emotional. In literature, you have more freedom; you can explore everything, even use slang or harsh words if needed. The key is to “switch the inks.” When writing diplomatically, you use one “ink,” and for literature, you switch to another. This skill takes time to develop, but it's essential. Thank you!

Both Interviewers: That will be all. Thank you very much sir!

*Interviewed By: Aishi Mitra, English, III Year
Vidushi Mohan, Economics, III Year
Edited By: Annesha Mistry, English, III Year*

Interview With **Rhythm Sangwan**



The LSR College magazine had the privilege of conducting an exclusive interview with Rhythm Sangwan, a standout athlete in the shooting sports arena. With an impressive track record, including gold and silver medals at the ISSF World Championships, ISSF Junior World Cup, and Asian Games, Rhythm has firmly established herself as one of India's brightest young talents. In our conversation, she shared her journey, the dedication it takes to reach the top, and her future goals in the sport.

Anoushka: How would you describe your time here at LSR and would you say it has shaped you into the person you are today post the Olympics?

Rhythm: My time at LSR has been great. I've met some really kind and wonderful people—especially my batchmates. The faculty has been incredibly supportive too. Meeting new people everyday and people with so many different cultures and different traditions. I have learnt a lot from them. After the Olympics, I did take a short break, but I've managed to attend some classes since then. Yeah so ultimately, it's going great. I think I have no words except it's a great college; great, wonderful, cooperative faculty who has helped me a lot in times of difficulties, especially when I couldn't give my exams due to international matches. They have cooperated wonderfully with me, especially Meenakshi Pahuja

ma'am and principal ma'am because of which it's been overall a smooth and fulfilling journey.

Aishi: Can you describe how the Olympics feels from the eyes of an LSR student?

Rhythm: Well as a student and as an athlete both the feelings remain the same, every athlete aspires to go there. It's a dream platform to be. Because it's the biggest stage in sporting history and I had the opportunity to perform on it and see it from my own eyes—feel the name and the fame of the Olympic Games. Yeah I experienced it all and it was amazing. Meeting new athletes, old competitors as well, to compete among the best athletes, best shooters—it was outstanding, it was a feeling like no other. To represent my country, it was a proud and colossal moment for me.

Anoushka: What advice would you offer to current and future athletes at LSR who aspire to excel at sports?

Rhythm: Well I would tell them to keep working hard and keep learning. Do not get demotivated by failures. Be strong. Keep at it. Keep learning new things. Even at this stage, I'm still learning. I get to learn something everyday, whether in my sport or in academics or otherwise. So I believe ultimately, my final advice to them would be to keep a broad mind and keep working hard. Enjoy what you are doing. That is the most important. Enjoying what you do is very essential to doing well in your job—whatever you want to do great in life, you got to enjoy it.

Aishi: Since we've been asking very serious questions, let's go to an unserious one. In another universe, if shooting wasn't your first pick of sport, what other sport could you see yourself partaking in?

Rhythm: Lawn tennis! I have never played it but I've always admired the tennis outfits and the attitude that the women tennis players hold—the grit and the ambition. Shooting is a very calm game, quite opposite to lawn tennis. I feel that I would have loved to go to the Olympics again and play that game.

Anoushka: For the next question, what initially sparked your passion for shooting and how your early experience at LSR helped shape your athletic journey?

Rhythm: My parents—especially my mom—were really passionate about sports and wanted us to get involved in at least one sport or extracurricular activity. One day, we went to a shooting range, and I just loved it. The sound of the guns firing, the smell of the ammunition—it excited me so much. I was like, yeah, I’m going to do this—let’s start today! I was really excited, and that’s how my journey began. By the time I joined LSR, I had already been shooting for a while. My first year was super hectic, and I didn’t have much time to make new friends, which was tough. But my classmates were extremely nice, helpful, and just honestly adorable people. My teachers were also really kind. So yeah, I had a great time, and things have been going really well since then.

Aishi: Alright, onto the next question. Sports often teaches us about teamwork, resilience and leadership. Can you share a key life lesson you learnt at LSR that continues to influence your personal and professional life today?

Rhythm: Well, I did make a few friends at LSR that helped me with my assignments, projects and presentations and through that I learnt teamwork and learnt about people, their skills and their point of view teaches you a lot because shooting is an individual game. But yeah sports has taught me a lot, it has taught me not to take failures as failures because they always carry with them a lesson and to always keep these lessons in mind and just bounce back stronger.

Anoushka: So for our last question—how do you manage to balance academic life with the demands of a dedicated sports career? What strategies do you find most effective?

Rhythm: I found it much easier when I was in school than in college to manage, because the studies and workload were much lesser, and also less difficult. My schedule has just become more hectic over the years. It was difficult, and it is still difficult at times, because you’re dealing with matches and exams, and sometimes one or the other suffers. I try to study whenever I get the chance. I carry my books with me to competitions. But if I’m being real, most of my studying happens just ten days before the exams. So, like a lot of college students—I kind of wait till the last minute to study. (laughs)

Anoushka: That is wonderful and relatable. Is there something else you would like to tell us for the magazine?

Rhythm: I’d just say that my parents have played a huge role in helping me balance both academics and sports. From the beginning, they told me I had to carry both hand in hand—I couldn’t leave academics for shooting, or shooting for academics. They never pressured me about marks. They always said, “Just try to learn from your studies. Pass the exams, that’s enough—because who cares?” (laughs) They’ve always reminded me that I’m doing something meaningful, and sometimes it’s hard—but I should enjoy the stage I’m at. Not everyone gets to do so much at such a young age: studying, playing sports, and representing your country. I’m really grateful for that. Also, my coach has been my biggest

*Interviewed By: Aishi Mitra, English, III Year
Anoushka Sinha, English, III Year
Edited By: Kaashvi Jatrana, Psychology*

In Conversation With

Ria Chopra



Ms Ria Chopra is a writer and digital creator who explores what it means to be human in the age of the internet. With a focus on Gen Z, pop culture, and the internet, her work speaks for itself. An LSR alumna, she's currently writing her debut non-fiction book, releasing with Bloomsbury in 2025.

How has your time at LSR influenced your journey, both personally and professionally?

Growing up in Delhi, I knew a lot of people who had gotten into LSR and spoke highly of the literature department. I had this confidence of childhood, at which point it felt like I could do whatever I wanted to. So, at the age of 16, I decided that I wanted to study literature at LSR. I was one of those kids who grew up reading far beyond my years, and to complement that, I was also interested in academic-adjacent activities such as quizzing and debating. I think all of these things led me to want to pursue literature. Swept up in this sense of childhood confidence, I'd also decided that reading literature would lead to becoming a writer, there was no other option. It's serendipitous that I ended up doing exactly that.

In college, I had professors, who for the first time un-

derstood how I wanted my academics to mould my worldview and to use my worldview to mould my academics. All of my professors became used to the fact that most of the examples in my assignments would come from pop culture. I still distinctly remember that we had to write a research paper for Frankenstein in the second year, and I told Mahesh sir, that I would write a research paper on all the different film adaptations of Frankenstein. This taught me to use my literary lenses to be able to analyze other kinds of art.

I come from a private school in Delhi, which means that I've grown up just seeing people from similar backgrounds as me.. Coming to college was an eye-opener to the vastness of the kinds of people and experiences that people have. It made me cognizant of all my blind spots. I don't think I would have been able to reach the point that I did by going to a private university. I know people say that college is kind of a mixed bag, but I thoroughly enjoyed it and a lot of credit goes to college for making me who I am.

You've humorously spoken about not having a linear career trajectory, moving from consulting to your current work. What drove that pivot, and how did you navigate it?

When I was in college, an either-or was imposed on you, like either you become a starving artist or you sit for placements. None of those options were acceptable to me because I'd known for a long time that I was a creative person who also liked formal organisational structures. I sat for placements in 2020 because I was aware of the fact that landing a stable job would be beneficial (during a pandemic), and I managed to get a job that I loved. I worked at Accenture for two years and my bosses were quite understanding when I started to write for publications. Slowly, I also began getting readership and visibility online, and soon a lot of people were reaching out to me for work. That was when I realized the avenue of opportunities that were out there, and that I couldn't have one job because I wanted to do all of those things. Around mid-2023 I decided to go fully freelance because one career was just not enough

to include all of me.

Being a freelancer is romanticised, but it is a challenge. People around me get promotions and appraisals and pay hikes, and I don't get any of those things. It's very isolating to not be understood, career-wise, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. I have a strong support system in my family, and I'm constantly getting to do newer things that I wouldn't even have dreamt of. A year ago I wouldn't have even imagined that a university in the US would call me to talk about my experience studying social media in India.

As a creator, how do you build a community in a time where everything is so saturated? How do you figure out that your voice is really unique?

My childhood was spent on random corners of the Internet — I know how niche internet communities function, I know how trends emerge, I know how memes and virality come about. Having an understanding of the way social media works helps me understand things like community building and also minute details like what is the best hook I can put in a video so that more people see it.

There are a lot of us who are talking about the same things, sharing the same opinions, and on the same platform. My goal is to make sure I'm actually adding value to the discourse. Very often things will happen and I will not say anything about them, because I don't want to be noise. I want to be the kind of person that when people come across, they know they will learn something genuinely new. Why would I just want to regurgitate what everyone's saying? I'm not AI.

I'm also genuinely myself on all my social media platforms. I refuse to be niche — I couldn't pick one career, and I can't pick only one thing to talk about. Something that started as a joke with my friends is that whenever I post, you never really know what you're going to get. It's a surprise. It will be good, but nobody knows what it really will be. I think that wholesomeness and ingenuity appeal to people. All of those factors add up to people wanting to be part of this community. When you're unabashedly yourself online, it permits people to also unabashedly be themselves.

As someone deeply engaged with pop culture and self-expression, what are your thoughts on the rise of AI and its impact on creativity?

It's a little sad to see how much AI proliferation is happening and how normalised it is. There is a poem I like

a lot by Joseph Fasano called 'For a Student Who Used AI to Write a Paper' that goes, "What are you trying to be free of?". This is something you are taught a lot when you're going down careers that are arts-oriented, your joy has to be in the work. If you genuinely feel joy in the process of writing, what does AI do for you?

Art circles are also elitist, there's a lot of judgment and people look down upon things like AI. Craft is something that has value, and AI eliminates the presence of craft. I worked on this report last year for Kommune and we spoke about how AI is going to become normal, but it's also going to become shameful, what we called "Your AI is showing". I wish I could understand what drives people to use AI, especially as a writer or as an artist of any sense. That is why I don't use it and I don't think it's a great idea for younger writers to use it, except perhaps for logistical help.

With a significant social media presence, your work revolves around digital spaces. How do you mind a balance between engagement and detachment?

Not having a niche is something I've consciously done, because I need social media to be fun and not work. Taking social media breaks, not hopping onto every trend, and not picking a niche do hurt your engagement. But I need it to be fun and I am going to do whatever it takes for social media to stay fun for me. Just because I happened to pick the same field for work, doesn't mean that I need to be overwhelmed by it all the time. I've reached a point where I know when to shut my eyes and my brain. If it gets too much, I'm also okay deleting the app and letting opportunities go, if it's helping my mental health.

I also draw mental boundaries about things from my life that I am okay sharing and putting up for public consumption and what I am not, which is also aimed at making my social media experience as healthy as possible.

A lot of us consume similar media and so there's also this flattening of experiences to some extent. How do you choose your topics in a way where you can create a psychic distance and be able to look at what you're doing, objectively?

I've recently come across the term "small data". Big data is the large data sets, whatever people offer to social media companies and the conclusions they draw from that. A lot of the things that we get today are pieces of big data, such as recommendations from Netflix, or your Instagram explore page. The second you become a part of big data, a flattening of experience takes place, it leads to a homogeneity of culture at large. You stop having

your compass to figure out what is good and what isn't, because things that have been presented to you are already popular, like a reel with hundreds of thousands of likes.

I think a lot of my themes come from this need to not want to be part of big data. Small data is a parallel to big data, it's the more qualitative things that you see. If five of my friends from different friend groups are all talking about the same thing, I can collate that as small data to try to draw some conclusions from it. It isn't something that is happening en masse, but it is my personal experience. It comes from noticing and observing things that are happening to me in real life and from the confidence that the things that I find interesting are genuinely interesting.

You debut novel is highly anticipated – can you share any hints about what readers can expect ?

A lot of these small data concepts are also the theme of my book. It's a non-fiction collection of essays about my experience growing up with the internet and also because of the internet. Every essay deals with a different aspect of our life and how the internet has transformed it. When we studied History in school, we would talk about these grand narratives of wars, kings or the Industrial Revolution, but people were living through it and what they were experiencing is also history. The

book is about how, similarly, in this time of algorithms and Big Tech and multiple large-scale internet phenomena, the tiny things happening in our life are just as pivotal. I also feel a lot of our experiences need to be put down on paper. Some things happen on the Internet that you only talk about online, but for it to reach the physical medium of books is important. This is also history and it needs to be put down in some way. It's a narrative nonfiction, a combination of research and my personal experiences.

It's a book for young people and about young people, written by a young person. When I started writing, one of my biggest reasons was spite (laughs). I was tired of the dismissive way traditional Indian media spoke about young people and our interests. This book is aimed at correcting some of the perspectives that people older than us or younger than us have about us. I'm quite excited for people to read it. I think people are going to see a lot of themselves in this book.

*Interviewed By: Anoushka Sinha, English, III Year
Vaidehi Krishnan, Philosophy, III Year
Vidushi Mohan, Economics, III Year
Edited By: Jiya Jawa, Philosophy, II Year*

Interview with Ms. Ministhy. S

Thank you so much for agreeing to do the interview. The first question that I had was, considering that you're an IAS officer by profession with a diverse educational background—we learned that you pursued engineering, then an MBA, and eventually joined the UPSC. Have you ever faced criticism regarding the authenticity of your translations? And, if yes, how have you navigated your way through an industry which is largely gate-kept, especially because translation is something that is so personal and culturally significant ?

That's a very perceptive question, and I appreciate it—rarely do people ask me this. We live in a world where people can be quite narrow-minded, confined to their specialties. This mindset creates division. I have faced criticism—“How can a bureaucrat translate? A bureaucrat handles files; what do they know about books?” But a bureaucrat is also a human being with diverse interests. The idea that only professional writers should write is limiting. A diplomat writes, a neurosurgeon can write, a physicist can write—why shouldn't literature be enriched by people from varied backgrounds? It should be. Literature will be valued more when it welcomes diverse voices.

For years, people believed that if you pursued arts and humanities, it was because you couldn't get into professional courses. But rejection is part of life. Even brilliant authors face rejection. The Book of Exodus was dismissed for 25 years before it gained recognition. Success often changes perception. Resilience is key. If you believe in your gift—whether it's translation, writing, or anything else—rejections should not deter you. I don't let setbacks get me down; they make me more determined. I seek out valuable books by underappreciated authors. Who would translate a Theyyam book? But I thought, “No, this is brilliant. People will love reading this.” For me, translation is a form of rebellion, a way to break stereotypes and amplify unheard voices.

The more multifaceted we are, the more we cultivate empathy. The world needs people who understand each other—less war, more compassion. Blood is red everywhere, grief is universal. A literature student can love math too; choosing literature doesn't mean they were bad at math, just that they loved literature more. For me, translation is also a service, just like my role as a public servant.

Thank you so much. In your blog, we could discern a



great love for literature, especially for Byron and Keats. We were also intrigued by the fact that you recollected a comment by your past peers, that your accent ‘drips of coconut oil’, and you referred to it as a wound. Was it because of this experience of discrimination that you endeavored to make literary works more accessible?

Not exactly, but the comment is true. I, like anyone else, speak my mother tongue without any accent. But when you speak a second or a third language your accent seeps in. But instead of appreciating that somebody knows multiple languages, we tend to make fun of them. So, when someone called my accent stark and irritating, It took me a long time to realize that it did not matter. The fact that I can read, write, and speak in three languages itself, is a skill very few people have and that's what matters. So, in a world that's eager to laugh at you for being different, translation is my way of saying that it is the different and authentic people who bring value because It's so easy to be part of the crowd. But, then, yes, the wounds are very real. Sometimes, it really hurts. So, maybe when my English translations win awards, it's my sweet revenge too.

All right. We were also very fascinated by your blog, and we really appreciate your

great love for literature and culture. So, we were wondering what brought about this intersection between literature and the civil services, because many aspirants we know tend to look down on these pursuits because literature and culture is not something that is worth their time, apparently. How do you approach this?

The Indian civil services, for example, require only a graduate degree in any subject—whether for the Indian Diplomatic Service, Indian Police Service, Customs, or Administration. You could have a degree in Sanskrit or Malayalam literature and still be eligible. The exam is open to bright young individuals from all disciplines because the country needs civil servants from diverse backgrounds.

When I'm in a tribal village, I may not speak the local language, but literature teaches the language of the heart. Who is more qualified than a literature student to understand human emotions? It is the skill set but more essentially, the emotional wisdom and intelligence that you bring, not the subject you study. In the civil service, your position of responsibility may change, one day you might be the finance secretary, the next GST commissioner or a district magistrate. A particular assignment or background might help in specific cases but the job equips you with certain skill sets that will make you a good leader—understanding problems and solving them. An engineering background may help in a technical department, but leadership is what truly matters.

As the honorable ambassador mentioned, language skills are invaluable in diplomatic services. These stereotypes—that certain subjects are less suited for civil service—are limiting. The truth is, all you need is curiosity, intelligence, and a willingness to work hard. Your subject of study is not the key—your mindset is.

Ah, thank you so much for that, because I think that's particularly very interesting for people who are preparing for UPSC right now. They tend to think that they need to stick to the syllabus, right? So, even in terms of what they're studying in their discipline, it is only as far as it gets them through UPSC, right? What you have said about how it's important to understand people, and that empathy being a good leader helps you to lead people better. I think that will be really interesting for a lot of people who are interested in going for civil services.

And, if you listen to the honourable ambassador, read as widely as you can. You should know what is happening. Another thing is to write it down. The ability to write prose and essays, the skill of understanding, comprehending, and coming up with solutions—these are crucial skill sets. If you are in the habit of reading, explore as many languages as possible. Read non-fiction, poetry, and theatre – don't restrict yourself to just novels. And the more widely you read, the more multifaceted you become the better you'll be at any job you aspire to, not just the civil services.

The focus should be on learning. The moment you say, "I will read only syllabus A to B because I want to pass the exam." you, yourself, are putting a restriction right there. Tomorrow, after you become a civil servant, you will stop reading. That's not the kind of people we should be. We should keep improving every single day. Wherever I go, I tell my two daughters, "Do not compete with other people; compete with only yourself. Am I better than what I was yesterday – physically, mentally, spiritually? Am I a better person?" That is the only question. It's your race, so you decide. But have the guts to ignore the unwarranted comments — that's a skill you develop. Hurtful comments will come. I saw a funny comment on YouTube, someone said IAS officers were taking away the jobs of translators, there are millions of books in this world please go ahead and translate. That sentence showed how prejudiced they are but it's their right to have that view. Should I let it affect me and my passion, though? No. That's the attitude: take criticisms as a given.

This is a very refreshing take because as literature and philosophy majors we have to fight for our degrees everyday, because these subjects are often looked down upon.

Ma'am, coming to your blog. Both of us are also very culturally inclined, and that's one of the few things I want to talk about now. When we went through your blog, we saw that you listen to The Doors, and saw mentions of The Perks of Being a Wallflower as well as a very rich cultural capital which spans from classics to contemporary literature, films, and music. You bring all of that together in your blog to discuss various topics. So again, as people who have grown up on the internet, it feels as if we have the world at

our fingertips, where everything is so easily accessible. Yet, it's still difficult to get recommendations or get suggestions because we tend to exist in an echo chamber. Would you have any recommendations for us on where to start with translated works or anything impactful that we could read?

Most of the world's best cinema is based on classic books—The Godfather by Mario Puzo, for instance. Reading a book before watching its adaptation enriches the experience. *Chocolat* changed its ending in the movie, yet both versions remain enjoyable. I was passionate about reading Oscar-winning screenplays, not just watching films. That's great literature—how a story is captured. *Chinatown*, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*—I read before watching.

Literature shouldn't be confined by language. Reading in one's mother tongue alongside English enhances understanding. If young people start translating their native literature, it creates a bridge between cultures. A translation club, where students share and translate poems from different Indian languages, would highlight how emotions remain universal.

Small projects like translating movie songs can deepen engagement with literature. Take an A.R. Rahman song in Tamil—translate it, then listen to a Marathi version of a similar theme. Love songs carry the same essence across languages. Technology enables us to create literature clubs. Jane Austen is widely adapted, but reading her originals lets you visualize Elizabeth and Darcy before watching Colin Firth. I read *Jane Eyre* in 7th standard, watched every version, and compared each depiction of Mr. Rochester. This is a personal joy that needs no justification. Finding like-minded people to discuss literature is essential.

Camilla, the wife of Prince Charles, follows the motto: "Do not complain. Do not explain." She owns her choices without justification. Similarly, I translate because I want to. If someone asks, "Why do you translate?"—they don't deserve an explanation. Owning your decisions is essential—criticism often comes from those doubting their own choices. Whatever subject you study, book you read, or friend you make—own it.

We talk about women's empowerment, yet sometimes women silence rebellion the most. Conformity is deeply ingrained. But this is the time to think independently. Growing up, we lacked access—Amazon and Kindle arrived recently. As a child, I dreamed of *The Third Form at St. Clare's* by Enid Blyton. Now, my children can instantly order any book.

Today, we are overloaded with data. The key is time management. People ask, "How do you find time?"—I am ruthless with it. If I decide to translate, I don't allow distractions. Hard work is non-negotiable. You can't party all the time and expect results. If Penguin sends copy edits and I return home at 7 PM, I will work from midnight to 4 AM to complete them before sleeping. That is my commitment.

Translation is not glamorous, nor does it pay well. Sometimes, a translator's name is hidden in a small font at the back of the book. But recognition is growing, and it remains a labor of love. Criticism and challenges exist in every field. People often ask, "Why don't you write instead of translating?" I used to explain, but now I just say, "Maybe I don't have the talent." That satisfies them, and I'm happy too. Sometimes, unconventional answers work best.

We were also talking about accessibility, and in this talk today, you mentioned that public libraries were very important. We didn't grow up with public libraries. Do you think they are very important for youth culture in India?

Extremely important. Extremely. Shahji, for example, whom I'm translating, writes about not having food to eat when he was growing up, but he read books during that time. He read the Russian classic 'When Daddy was a Little Boy', and I have translated it on my blog — maybe you can check that out. It helped him transcend his circumstances, including a death in the family, by holding on to the book and overcoming the trauma. It's so beautiful. In Malayalam, it is called the Vayanashala moment, the library moment, led by Mr. Panicker.

It also had a lot to do with the communist movement in Kerala, where public money was used to build a reading culture. So, fostering a reading culture is extremely important. But now you still read. Only, it is in a different way. At that time, it was brick-and-mortar books. So long as you read, whether you read on Kindle or mobile, it does

not matter. Just make sure that you read, that's all. We should let go of these rigidities that you must go to a library and pick up a hard copy. No, you can read Jane Austen on your Kindle too.

But then there's the question of accessibility. We have Amazon and Kindle, but we have to buy those books, and a lot of people can't afford to. Public libraries, however, can really help foster a reading culture.

That is a contribution of public libraries. Even now, people are going to free internet cafes and to use the high-speed connections. People aspiring for the civil services as well, use these services. Technology and the way we read should also be made accessible to all sections of the society. Not just books, but the latest technology should be available freely so that those who want to read can have access. For example, if you have an old laptop, instead of throwing it away, give it to a child who's studying but can't afford one. That's one way. Similarly, if you upgrade to a new Kindle, give your old one to someone. This culture of giving back should be nurtured. But there is no alternative to a reading culture — you can't become a writer or a translator overnight.

How do you think we can foster a reading culture in contemporary India?

It starts with all of us reading.

How should we foster it? Because even in our schools, we're not encouraged to read literature. It's very basic — it's just something we have to do to get through our exams, and that's the end of it.

I read a beautiful cartoon once—a mother and daughter each holding a book, while another mother

and daughter hold iPads. The mother with the iPad asks, "How do you get them to read?" That's it. The answer is simple—it starts at home.

I became a reader because my parents read. My house was filled with books, and if I asked for one, it was always there—maybe not a dress, but definitely a book. I did the same for my daughters, taking them to libraries and ensuring they developed the habit. Now, they recommend books to me. It doesn't matter what you read; what matters is that the culture of reading is nurtured early.

Teachers play a crucial role too. I was lucky to have Sister Marcela, who once wrote to me, "It's a joy to read your page. Keep writing." When I received rejection letters, I didn't care—because one person believed in me. That's all it takes. We should strive to be that person for someone else. Be the parent who encourages a child, the friend who shares a book, the teacher who inspires curiosity.

Start a reading society here. Discuss literature, break stereotypes. A political science student can love Austen, just as a mathematician can. My daughter is pursuing a PhD in mathematics, yet she loves Jane Austen. Why create barriers? If you love literature, you love literature—no matter your field.

Talking about the reading culture, especially in Kerala, reminded me of the reading culture in Bengal. I'm from Bengal.

Absolutely, it is the same thing.

My best friend, Sohini Sengupta, with whom I did an MBA from XLRI, has a house where the walls are like spirals of books, half in Bangla and half in English. So where does it start dear, it starts at home. We are the



homebuilders.

Do you have any advice, since the reading culture that has fostered over ages is unfortunately thinning out? What advice do you have, other than start reading at the base level?

Wherever you are, you have the power to create institutions. Right now, you're in LSR—this session itself is proof of that. Start clubs, hold discussions. Change begins with small steps.

Consider this—every Friday, volunteer in an underprivileged area and take books. Collect unused books from homes, gather 100, and donate them to a government school. Read a chapter in Hindi, English, or Malayalam, engage the children, turn it into a theater session or workshop. Literature isn't just about reading—it's about connection. Even simpler—after this session, pick a poem in your mother tongue, translate it, and share it. You'll hear the same emotions expressed across different Indian languages. Archive it, start a blog, share it. Before you know it, you're contributing to literature beyond borders.

You don't have to be in the literary field to love literature. Tomorrow, you might be a diplomat, a doctor, or a scientist, but that doesn't mean you can't read Hindi poetry or Tamil classics. It's all in the mind—it took me 50 years to realize that.

I came across an excerpt from, 'Do Not Ask The River Her Name' by Sheela Tomy.

I really want you guys to read it. It's based on the Israel Palestine Conflict. I translated it in record time because I was determined to get the story out. It's based on a Palestinian story by Mohammed Darvish called 'The Passport', and Sheela has acknowledged that. The Malayalis travel everywhere right? It's about a Malayali nurse who went as a caregiver to a Jewish family in Israel and it explores the entire Arab-Israeli conflict through her eyes. You end up reading about Christ, about the Jewish culture, and you understand that human beings are the same everywhere. It's beautiful, not because I translated it, but because Sheela is brilliant. She wrote Valli, the book that JCB showed us last year. Her work has a prophetic quality. I started translating it, and then October 7 broke out – what she wrote came true. Do read, or at least have it in your library.

That was the question around the book. Because it's about humans, right? It's about people. You understand what's happening with the people, and you don't see them as mere statistics, which is what we're used to initially, from the news and so on. But, how do your experiences as a bureaucrat, somebody who's responsible for working with people, influence how you translate this particular work and how you approach this book?

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a deeply sensitive subject. If a diplomat were to translate it, their perspective would reflect their profession. As an IAS officer, I don't deal directly with diplomatic missions—my knowledge comes from films like Schindler's List and extensive reading. But translating such a book requires far more. I spent hours studying Ben Gurion's speeches and Jewish history. Every nuance had to be carefully considered—one mistake could misrepresent historical or political realities.

For books with strong cultural and political contexts, translation demands deep understanding. You can't just represent things as they are without grasping their significance. When working on religious texts like the Bible, I keep both Malayalam and English versions open, cross-referencing and even consulting the author. Sometimes, perfecting a single sentence takes four to five hours.

Translation is an unseen labor. As His Excellency said, "Just because it's beautiful doesn't mean it's right." Literal translations are easy—that's why Google often fails. But AI lacks authenticity. A translator's touch is irreplaceable.

Thank you so much ma'am!

*Interviewed by: Anoushka Sinha, English, III Year and
Vaidehi Krishnan, Philosophy, III Year
Transcribed and Edited by: Ayushi Anand, Manasi Sharma,
English, III Year, and Himani Mehra, Economics, III Year*

“People always think that girls from LSR are feminists and very strong-headed. Well, I guess we are.”



OLYMPIAN MANU BHAKER

Lady Shri Ram College for Women proudly welcomed Olympians Manu Bhaker, Maheshwari Chauhan, and Rhythm Sangwan—alumnae who have carved their names in history. Manu, a double bronze medalist at Paris 2024, called herself “determined, passionate, and resilient.” Maheshwari inspired all, saying, “LSR women have changed the very fabric of the nation.” Though absent, Rhythm’s brilliance was deeply felt. The event was a powerful tribute to excellence, grit, and the LSR spirit.



AT



AT SEA –

The Fluidity of ‘Home’

“Yes! In the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shore less watery wild,
We mortal millions live alone.”

Matthew Arnold, *To Marguerite*: Continued

The word home has its root in the Germanic ‘khaim’ meaning ‘residence’. Address can be traced to ‘kei’ which means ‘to lie down’. If that was all it stood for, home and house would not have branched and become separate words. Meanings tend to linger in the spirit, which has already risen above the material, like the cloud of vapour hovering over your tea. The Irish have a unique tradition for when one leaves the ‘tigh’ or the house—they carry a small piece of the hearth with them. The symbolism is one of warmth, but does it not also extend to family dinners, communion, and hugs from home that you can place in your pockets?

At nineteen, packing your belongings in a purple suitcase does not connote severing yourself from your home. It is only later that you realise that your leaving did not leave a gaping wound behind; no void can be seen where you would stand, gossiping with your mother while she cooked dinner. The aroma of frying chillies continues to be just as pungent, even if your eyes do not water. You are missed, but no tangible crevice can be seen in place of your presence, while hundreds of kilometres away, you attempt to carve out your own space.

The first days accompanying independence always involve disorientation.

Uncertainty and excitement are forces that stretch your being apart; this tension leads to a shift in perspective—you begin seeking belongingness in experiences and interpersonal relationships. For a week, or let’s generously assume that for a month, you refrain from referring to your PG or apartment in this sacred

language you have reserved for somewhere else, which lay beyond the smoke or the crowd. Soon, however, the phrase treacherously. Within a year, your roommates know more about you than your closest friends. You, yourself have branched into a myriad of colours you could not have imagined at seventeen. The question of home has become intertwined with your quest for identity and self-discovery.

You long for your home—but your ‘nostos’ or homecoming is always a tainted nostalgia for the comfort of childhood. They have repainted the walls. Your brother no longer speaks to you. However, for the first time, when you say ‘I love you’ aloud, you realize that it was spoken in your home too. Now, you can see the words tucked in the bottle of ghee you brought with you. You hear them every evening when you video call your mother. They sound exactly like, “What did you eat today?” You lie. It’s your way of saying, “I love you too.”

Every sunset, you are envious of the birds returning to their nests. You yearn for that quotidian permanence too, but an ongoing collection of experiences can be settled for. The tortoise shall repose within itself as long as it’s on the waves. Home may be a hug today and perhaps a cup of coffee tomorrow.

Written by: Yoganjana Singh, English, II Year

Edited by: Baibhab Hazra, History, II Year

For the Love of Reading

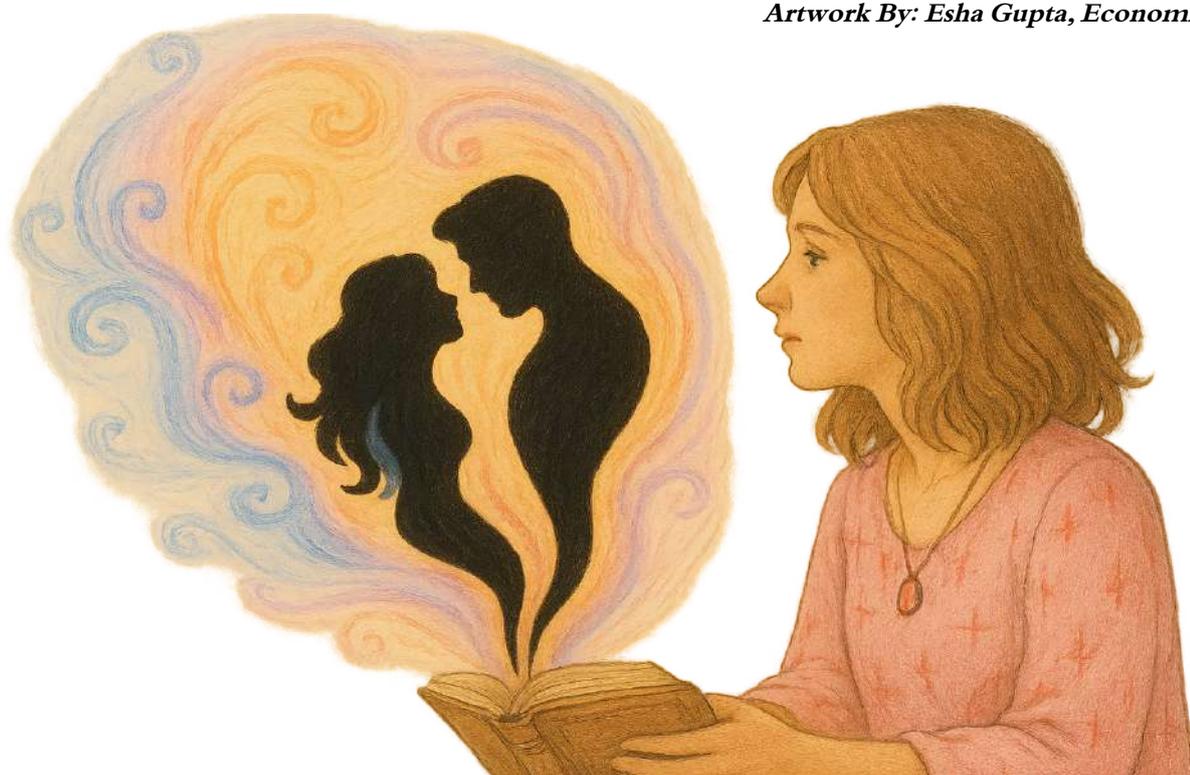
Romance—the pull between two souls, the quiet moments of understanding, the rush of emotions that makes the heart flutter. It’s more than just a genre—it’s a feeling, a heartbeat, woven into every page. And yet, romance novels are often dismissed, treated as unimportant, and considered by many as “not real reading.” But for the ones who treasure them, like me, they are anything but. They remind us of the beauty in vulnerability, the power of devotion, and the magic of love that defies all odds.

One of the most common reasons why people read romance is escapism—what’s so wrong with wanting a break from reality, right? Life can be overwhelming and unpredictable sometimes, often filled with stress, responsibilities, and endless thoughts racing through our minds. But in romance novels, love is certain. No matter the obstacles, no matter the heartbreak, love finds a way. And in a world that sometimes feels cold and chaotic, certainty can be comforting. For some, the mere idea of this kind of love—the unwavering devotion, the unshakeable certainty of a happy ending—ignites something deep within them. A quiet longing. A whispered hope. Because maybe, just maybe, one day, their own story will unfold the same way.

But romance is more than just escapism. It’s a way to feel. Some say we turn to romance because we crave emotional intimacy more than anything else. We love watching two characters truly see each other, understand each other, and grow together because there is just something deeply moving about witnessing love that transforms, not just into a relationship, but the people in it too! There is something profoundly powerful about love that changes us, making us into better, stronger, and more whole versions of ourselves. And that’s why it has become the place for some to feel truly understood.

And for people like me, the promise of a happy ending means everything. It doesn’t matter how many obstacles stand in the way; as long as the characters find their person and end up with the love they deserve, that’s all that matters. The real world is filled with so much negativity that we turn to books to escape because there, in those pages, love always wins. When I close a book, I want to be left with a sense of hope, not despair. I need a story where every struggle is meaningful and the heartaches are worth it, because in the end, love triumphs above all else, conquering all that stands in its way.

Written By: Daisy Doley, Philosophy, II Year
Edited By: Baibhabi Hazra, History, II Year
Artwork By: Esha Gupta, Economics, I Year



Falling in, Falling out

We often fall –
Fall in love, in admiration,
with the acts that touch our hearts,
with places full of enthralling art,
with people too good to be true,
we often fall in love with the view.
We fall for the kind gestures,
and for the golden moments that linger.

We fall for what matters,
and for what pleases our senses,

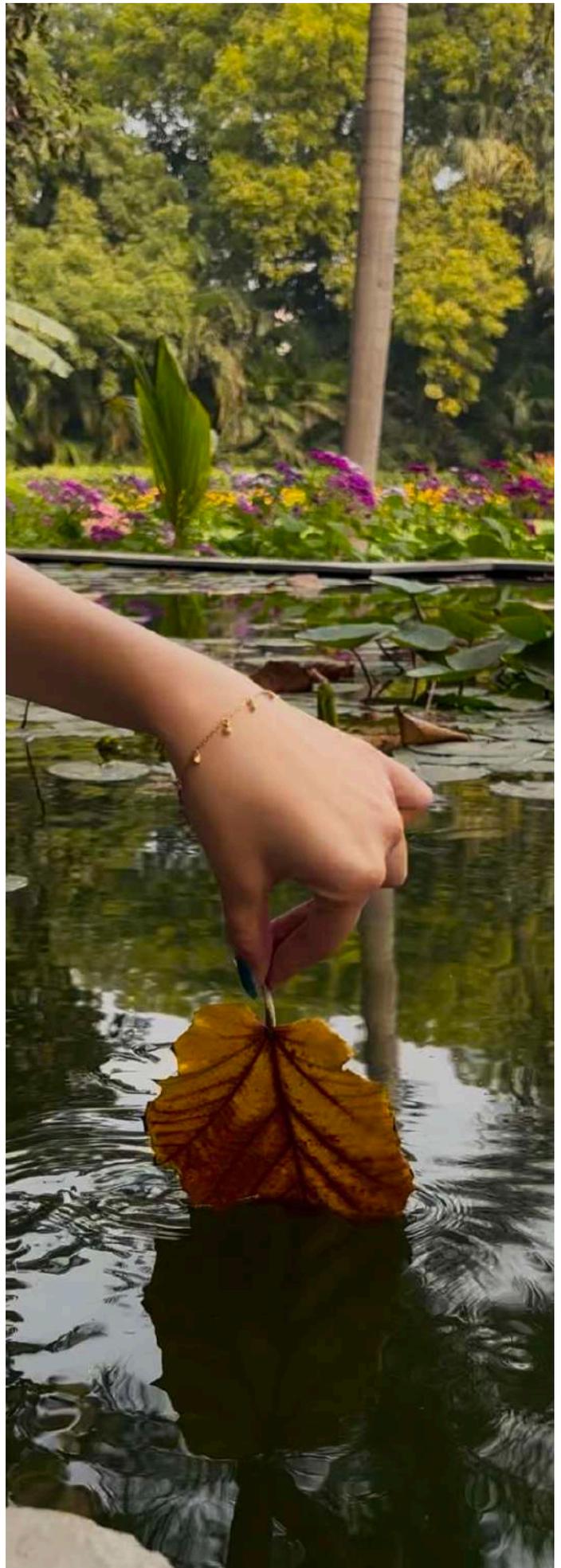
Thus it's certainly hard, to fall out,
Fall out of all that we've believed in,
Fall out of all that we've lived in,
Fall out of all the places we associate with,
Fall out of all the people we resonate with.

But my friends, think again.
It's not the memory we fall out of,
it's not the place either,
It's not the connection we fall out of,
it's not the learning either.

Perhaps falling out is for our own good.
I'll explain exactly how.
When we fall out of the endless pit of doubts,
out of the miseries we have unknowingly embraced,
out of the places which made us feel erased,
out of the toxicity we chose to unsee,
out of the invisible cage holding us from being free.

Even if it feels like missing out on something large,
we're exactly where we are supposed to be at this hour.
It's for our own good, when we fall out,
from the shell of our insecurities and fears,
from holding back our steps and our tears,
To fall in once again,
into a new path waiting for us to pass,
into a better world ready to accept us with no masks.
And so my friends, what I am trying to impart,
is that falling out isn't always about falling apart.

Written by: Yashi Goswami, History, II Year
Edited by: Disha Bharti, Sociology, III Year
Image Credits: Saina Arudeep, Psychology, I Year



The Misunderstood Genius of American Psycho



“I guess I’m a pretty sick guy.”

This chilling moment of self-awareness by the main character perfectly encapsulates the film’s complex and often misunderstood nature.

I happened to have watched American Psycho before Christian Bale’s Patrick Bateman took over Instagram reels. I instantly loved the film and Bale’s performance. Thus, it pains me to see Bateman become an icon for the misogynists of the Internet, the incels, and the so-called sigma males. While the film may appear to glorify Bateman, it is actually a satirical take on the character himself.

In the dog-eat-dog world of investment banking, the vain and painfully pretentious Patrick Bateman seems to fit in perfectly. He is the ultimate stereotype of yuppie culture: wealthy, conceited, addicted to sex, drugs, and excessive consumerism. Despite his perfectly put-together exterior, Bateman is constantly battling low self-esteem and often doubts his sanity. He compensates for his anxiety through vanity, meticulously detailing every feature of his wealthy lifestyle. If you have read the book, you’ll come across extensive descriptions of branded clothes, intense workouts, elaborate skincare routines, precious business cards, expensive food and drinks, etc. This unwavering attention to detail, to the point of obsession, is a means of exerting control over his otherwise chaotic life.

The famous business card scene perfectly illustrates the shallow nature

wear expensive suits, have slicked-back hair and do the same job. All they do is differentiate the font, colour and texture of the cards, trying to one-up each other. They are powerful men reduced to petty insecurities. It is apt that American Psycho was directed by a woman. Mary Harron is less impressed by the psychopathic Patrick Bateman than a man might have been. She didn’t mean to turn him into a hero, an idol for misogynist men. According to Roger Ebert, Harron considered the film a feminist piece, a condemnation of a certain kind of masculinity that harms not only the world but also those who embody it. In this regard, American Psycho resonates with Fight Club in presenting a damaging form of masculinity but showcasing it as dysfunctional, delusional, and distressing. The problem arises when viewers start idolising the problematic character as a “real man”.

This phenomenon isn’t new. Toxic male characters are often admired for their ‘masculinity’, rebellious attitude, and expressions of violence and rage, frequently directed against women. Bateman has become sort of an Instagram celebrity, with people glorifying his callous attitude towards women, his almost perfect physique, and his wealth. Bateman’s influence has expanded among Gen-Z and has made him an icon of meme culture.

However, going beyond the surface, it is easy to notice Bateman is not an alpha male at all. He does not have a master plan of destroying society, nor is he an anti-authoritarian revolutionary. He is insecure and conformist, and his violent impulses are just extreme expressions of his feelings of inadequacy. He kills women for sadistic sexual pleasure and men because they upset him or make him feel inferior. The fact that he has a boring job he hates, his hyper-aggressive sexuality, his abuse of sex workers, his crippling loneliness, and the banality of his killings make him rather pathetic and pitiful. In these aspects, he is just like any other serial killer. He appeals to incels because he is, in essence, a more attractive version of themselves. American Psycho was ahead of its time in its scathing commentary on materialism, consumerism and toxic masculinity. Combining elements of slasher movies with dark comedy, it is a clever satire. The final joke is that nobody seems to notice that anything is wrong with Bateman. They weren’t listening anyway.

Written by: Sagarika Jha, Philosophy Department, II Year

The Price of Silver

I was five when my mom showed me her silver **payals**. She had received them at her wedding, she explained. I was curious—when would I be given such a delicate anklet, one that made even simple feet look so beautifully adorned? I couldn't wait to be a woman.

I was eight when I visited a **jutti** shop with my grandmother. Before me lay sandals bedecked with ghunghroos and mirrors, each one shimmering with promise. None of them fit though. I was too little. I craved the femininity I was too young to carry. I couldn't wait to be a woman.

Now I'm eighteen, standing at the edge of girlhood, waiting for the light to turn green, to let me through this rite of passage. I desperately question the traffic lights: what lies beyond? Their **amber** glow entreats me to slow down. Maybe the beautiful jewellery, the pinks, and the bows are clouding my judgement. I'm

hesitant to cross the line. "Look both ways before you cross", they say, but why is every glance etched with expectations?

I'm supposed to turn soft—soft enough to nurture and soft enough to surrender. I'm supposed to be a woman.

Then why does that silver payal feel like a ball and chain tied around my ankles?

Why do the sandals now feel like bricks and iron bound to my feet?

I see my hands transform into those of a woman – hands that heal, but are often bruised.

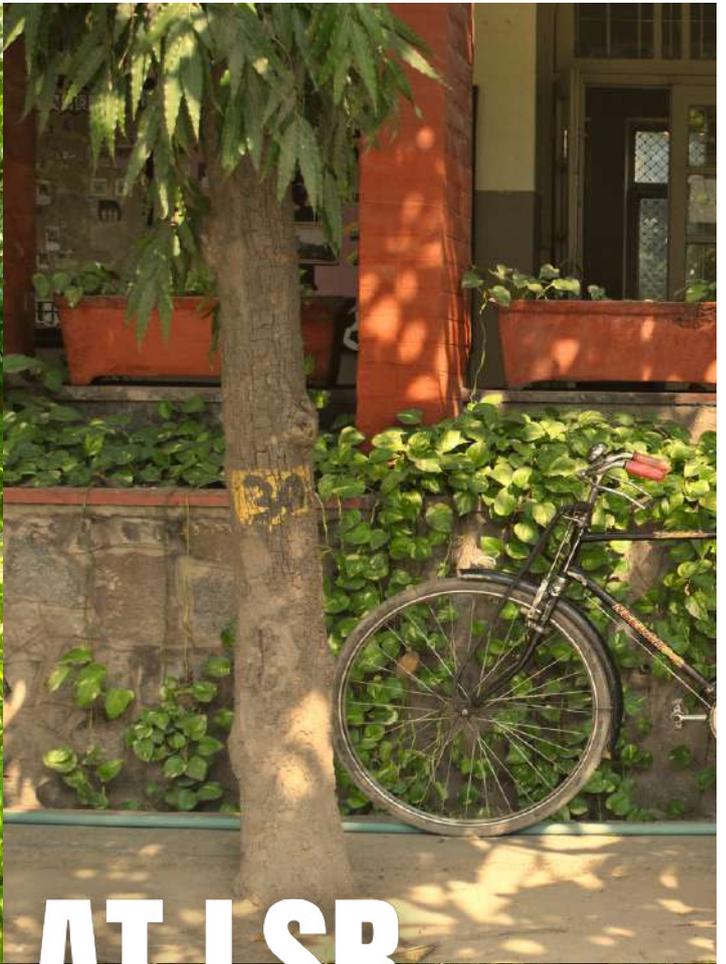
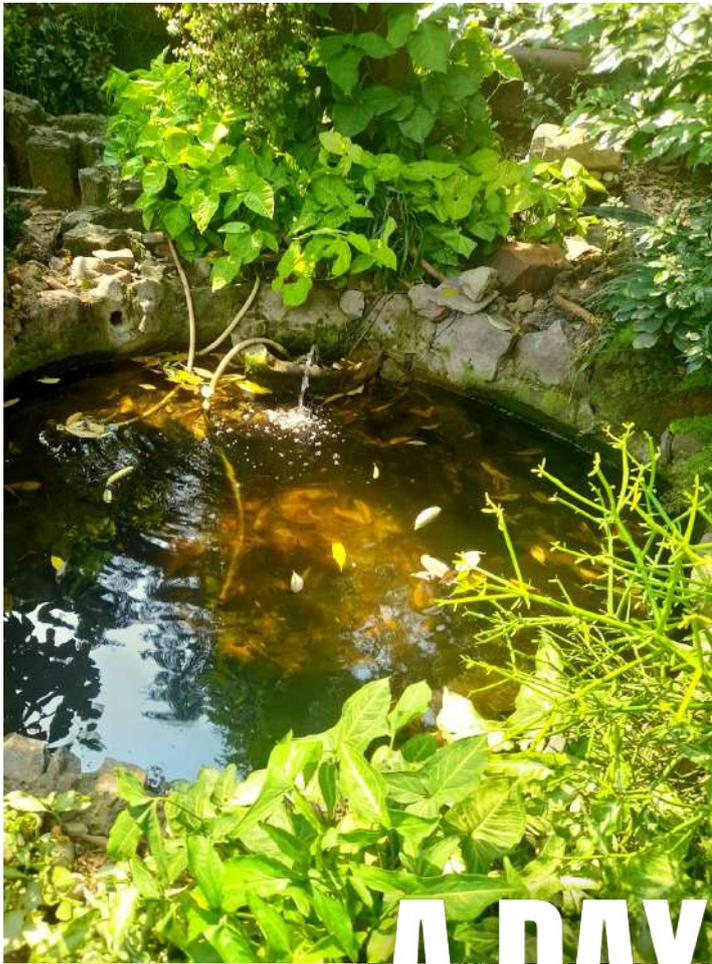
I want to be a girl again.

Written by: Iraa Gupta, Sociology, I Year

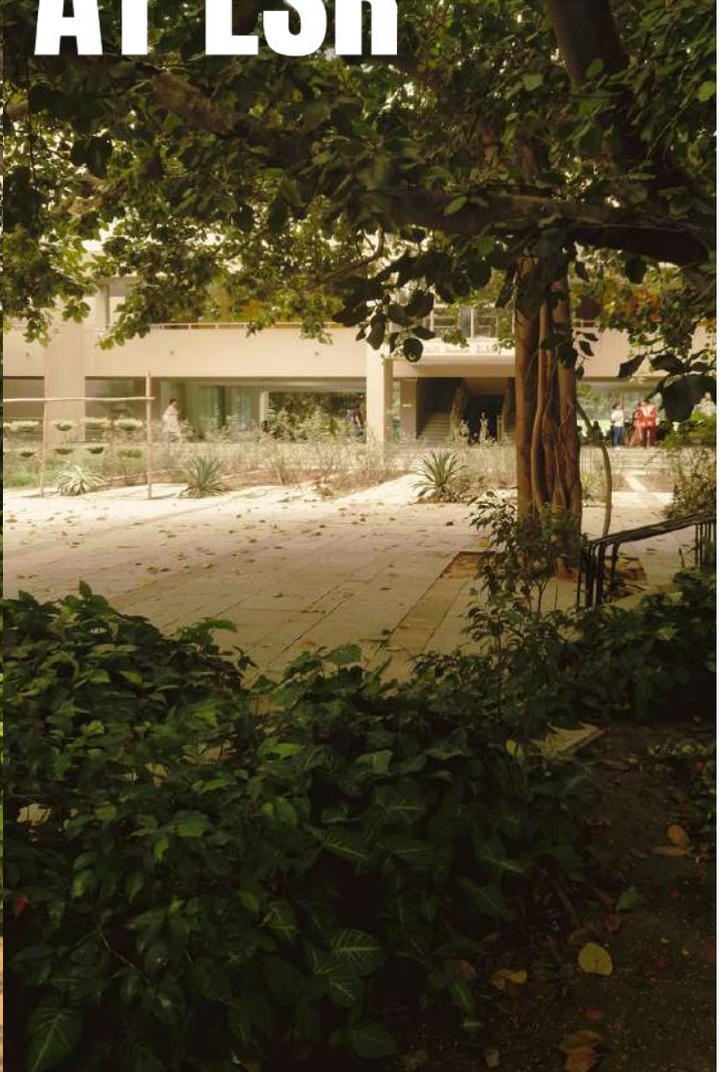
Edited by: Jiya Jawa, Philosophy, II Year

Image Credits: Parvathy K, Sociology, II Year





A DAY AT LSR





Don't Take Away **My Plate**



A reading of Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan* in my third year of college made me rethink whether cities can ever truly be an escape for Dalits from the rigidity and shame of caste. Like any protagonist of Dalit literature, I too hoped that migration to the capital, in the heart of one of the most elite institutions of the country, would free me from the shackles of caste, providing me with dignity and acceptance. However, my last three years tell me something different. These cosmopolitan spaces predominantly inhabited by upper castes are not spaces of freedom but rather chambers that strip us of our identity. Acceptance here depends on how well we can disown our identity to blend in, soften our voices, and erase the very markers that define us. Here, caste does not announce itself in open hostility but creeps in insidiously; in the form of their friends refusing to sit at the same table with them on a Wednesday night when meat is served in the hostel or during protests by their upper caste batchmates against people consuming certain food on Navratri. It seeps into friendships, with every disapproving glance, slowly drawing the invisible line between them and us. To a nineteen-year-old arriving in the city, desperate for belonging, at first, these exclusions seem almost trivial. But over time, their repetition normalizes discrimination.

No one preaches caste supremacy aloud, but its logic is reinforced through rituals of exclusion, through what is unspoken but deeply understood.

The internalization of shame seeps into the most private of spaces—the kitchen, the dining table, the plate I eat from. Food, which should nourish, becomes a battleground, where my identity is constantly compromised. With the dominant caste landlord asking about my food practices, customs, and family name, the desperation of being equal bubbles inside me, rigorous, and the idea of being accepted starts looking like a foreign concept altogether. The purity of their home, its walls, and the corresponding oppressive history must not be tainted by the touch of the Dalit plate. Caste re-emerges in quotidian encounters with the neighbour asking if the house stinks when my fish is cooked, or with the awkwardness of keeping my culinary practice a secret in an effort not to offend upper caste sensitivities. In a country where the celebration of every culture is linked to its food, I wonder what happens when a culture does not have a mainstream celebration of its own? Does its food also submit to invisibility just like its people? Three years later I ask myself: did this city make me more skilled at hiding who I am?

It did. With every attempt to conceal my caste, with every carefully chosen piece of clothing meant to blend in, and every instinct to walk away from spaces that spoke of identity, I ran. I escaped. Like Frantz Fanon's Black man, who saw manhood only through the lens of whiteness, I too saw social elevation as inseparable from the image of an educated, casteless woman. Every mention of my family name made me conscious and defensive, as if I had to prove my education, my worth, my right to be here. I was so busy fighting that it took years of rejection for me to realize, that more than anything, it was an internalized battle. More than anyone else, I believed in my inferiority and looked everywhere for upper-caste approval to validate my worth. And, I am never going to find it. People who built their merit and fortunes on the carcasses of our exploitation, their hands stained with our blood—still clinging to the power of selective erasure and exclusion—will never look at the ruins they are standing on, and see us as equals. I have learnt to accept it, I know better now. And, if there is only one thing this city has taught me it is the courage to live without that.

*Written by: Annesha Mistry, English, III Year
Image Credits: Harshita Nareda, History, I Year*



Opinion Conundrum

The door slammed as I stepped out of the car, frustration simmering after yet another heated argument with my parents about the state of society. But it wasn't their reasoning that got to me—it was the off-hand remark: "Isko Delhi ki hawa lag gayi hai." That seemingly throwaway comment struck a nerve, not just for its dismissal but for what it revealed about how easily one's opinions can be reduced to a mere byproduct of circumstance—an unwitting indoctrination.

But indoctrination is real—our opinions are rarely as independent as we'd like to believe. Aren't they shaped by the world we inhabit? A confluence of media we consume, narratives spun by professors, peers, and family, and the cultural values that frame our understanding of everything around us? A student's greatest power lies in their opinions, their ideas, and the agency to voice them. Yet, navigating this avalanche of ideas—from gender rights and political ideologies to philosophical dilemmas—can feel like treading an ever-shifting ground.

The dilemma of opinion formation is a conundrum—a constant oscillation between self-discovery and external influence. University life, particularly at LSR, propels students to engage in a battleground of thought, where ideas clash and convictions are challenged. One's ability to reformulate and reshape their ideas when confronted with a better one is an individual trait—a rare, celebrated trait rather.

As a student of social science, I am fortunate to engage with literature that unpacks deep political and ethical dilemmas. But with that privilege comes a realization: the narratives I encounter rarely fit neatly into the present discourse. In forming our worldviews, we wrestle with a gamut of conflicting outlooks—cynicism, the idea that there's nothing left to hope for; absurdism, idea of a meaningless reality; nihilism, which discards meaning altogether; and idealism, which urges us to believe in something greater. It's a constant push and pull, a tug-of-war between skepticism and optimism.

French philosopher Michel Foucault reminds us that knowledge is never neutral. It is shaped by those in power through institutions like schools, media, and the state. What we accept as "normal," "rational," or "common sense" is not merely self-evident; it is constructed through discourse, designed to serve certain interests. Indoctrination, then, is not an overt, deliberate act but a systemic one, embedded in the very structures that govern our thinking. People don't adopt dominant ideologies because they are explicitly told to—they do so because the system makes certain beliefs feel inevitable.

Ever wondered why nearly every second person in college calls themselves a radical feminist without necessarily engaging with feminist ideas? That's because university spaces are saturated with certain intellectual currents, just as dominant media narratives are predicated on particular political interests. The point isn't to dismiss the role of peer influence or academic culture in shaping one's views, but to emphasize something even more crucial: the necessity of questioning why we believe what we do.

Opinion formation isn't hassle-free—but it can't be dispensed with either. It is the cornerstone of one's voice, the foundation of ideas that push the world forward. The real challenge lies not in simply having opinions, but in interrogating them—examining where they come from, who they serve, and whether they truly stand the test of scrutiny. Given the demands of a student's role, they often struggle to form authentic opinions—grappling with accusations of internalizing dominant university narratives while navigating the vast body of literature they encounter. It is a continuous process of learning and unlearning, a constant negotiation with an ever-evolving flux of ideas.

Written By: Pakhi Dhokariya, Political Science, II Year
Artwork By: Esha Gupta, Economics Department, I Year

Labels Are For Pickle Jars

The world has become increasingly obsessed with categories, sorting everything and everyone into neat piles and shoving them into boxes like— Anastasia in Cinderella’s shoe, forcing a fit that was never meant to be. Some labels bring empowerment, clarity, and a language to voice our irritation, oppression, and pride. Others feel more like handcuffs. Like a post-it note – it’s on our back saying, kick me. All of us have labels thrust onto us even before we can understand their meaning and implications; demarcations like Indian, Muslim, Boy, Girl, ‘Reserved’, that close onto us like bars of a cage: first as expectations, then as demands for consistency and conformity.

Labels are supposed to be useful— they simplify and help navigate multiplexity and turn the abstract into the corporeal. They give us a language to describe who we are, a syntax to allow connection and solidarity. In fact, when marginalised groups claim labels: Dalit, Woman, Queer, Disabled, and Black with a capital B— labels act as a form of resistance, a way of demanding space in a world that refuses to adjust for them, claiming visibility in a world that erases them. But while labels help us organise the world, they also shrink it. They create assumptions, and they demand consistency. Society looks at the labels hanging from our necks, appraises them accordingly, and tells us what we must be. “You are a girl, behave like it,” “You cannot be Queer and Muslim, you must choose,” “How can you be a nationalist, and still criticise your own country?”

You disappoint them just a little bit, step out of the boundaries they created around you without your consent or consensus and you instantly become an anomaly, and consequently a danger. Who would want weeds growing out in our manicured lawns, how dare you exist in between binaries and without our permission?

But this is not just a personal problem, it’s a political one too. Entire communities have been constructed, oppressed, and even regulated through the power of categorization. Whether that be the segregation laws of the Jim Crow era or the gender apartheid in Afghanistan today. The demands of the majority is healthy democracy in action, but catering to the needs of the marginalised needs is the plague of appeasement and vote banks at play. If you have the misfortune of not being a white, cis het upper-class man, every position you hold is going to be seen as a diversity quota fill and not one you are deserving of. Governments decide who qualifies as a refugee, a citizen, or an “illegal alien.” What classifies as socialist universal basic income is what must surely be a freebie. Who is an extremist and violent threat and who is just a disturbed young man who just accidentally happens to have a nazi tattoo.

Take national identity. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, explains that nations are social constructs, bound together by shared myths rather than innate truths. Yet, nationalism today often demands rigid loyalty: you are either a patriot or a traitor, with no room for critique. Frantz Fanon, reflecting on colonialism, spoke of how colonized people were given labels by their oppressors—“civilized” if they conformed, “rebellious” if they resisted. Even now you are either the ‘modern minority’ or the terrorists seeking to upend



native culture. You are peaceful only if you are in constant denial of your oppression, otherwise, you are a threat to the state.

Even in progressive spaces, labels can be wielded as weapons. Who gets to call themselves feminists? Who is “queer enough”? Who belongs to a culture, and who is “appropriating” it? In the pursuit of identity, we sometimes create new exclusions, and new gatekeepers. Sometimes when you let some people in, they like to close the door behind them.

Labels make things easier. But people aren’t products lined up on a grocery shelf. We shift, change, and grow. Identities overlap. We can be feminist and critical of certain feminist narratives, Indian and question nationalism, and biracial without splitting ourselves into percentages. Homi Bhabha calls this “hybridity”—the space between rigid categories where new identities form and I for one am inclined to agree. The real question is: do we control our labels, or do they control us? It’s not wrong to claim an identity, but it should be a choice, not a constraint. That too must be a choice we are free to revise. Maybe the best way forward is to recognize labels for what they are—tools, not definitions. After all, labels may be useful for organizing pickles, but people are far too complex for that.

Written by: Kainaat Arif, Political Science, I Year

Illustration by: Sneha Verma, Economics, II Year

A Fantastic Life in Plastic!

Scene one. A barren desert with silence all around. Suddenly, a figure appears, and the camera tilts upward. Margot Robbie, in the iconic black-and-white swimsuit, enters the first scene as Barbie in Greta Gerwig's 2023 blockbuster. Barbie undertakes a journey of self-reflection and self-discovery as she is introduced to the Real World of patriarchy for the first time.

Mattel's CEO, Ynon Kreiz, wanted the project to be more than a means to sell toys. He hoped for Barbie to be a culturally significant moment. "It's not about making movies so that we can go and sell more toys. We've been doing well selling toys without movies," said Kreiz. The film, largely praised for its feminist themes and comedic self-awareness, was heralded as the 'film of the year' alongside Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, grossing \$1.4 billion worldwide. An ensemble cast, clever marketing strategies, and the glamour associated with the iconic doll allowed the film to become both a commercial and critical success.

One prong of its marketing strategy was Mattel's carefully curated collaborations with multiple brands. Mattel partnered with 165 brands across various categories—clothing, accessories, decor, and lifestyle—to promote Barbie. For example, MOON, an American oral care company known for its electric sonic toothbrushes, collaborated with Mattel to release the Barbie and MOON Pink Collection, which included a hot pink electric toothbrush and pink toothpaste. This collection was priced at \$80 (approximately Rs. 6,900).

"Only the small secrets need to be protected. The big ones are kept secret by public incredulity," said Marshall McLuhan. Thus, in light of these collaborations, questions can be raised regarding the 'feminist allure' of the film. The film doesn't lack self-awareness, evident when Helen Mirren's narration states, "Note to the filmmakers: Margot Robbie is the wrong person to cast if you want to make this point," when Stereotypical Barbie, played by Robbie, believes she is unattractive. Lisa McKnight, Mattel's chief brand officer, emphasised this self-awareness, saying, "We are self-aware and we can appreciate the jokes." However, Mattel's self-awareness appears to be a half-baked attempt to "pinkwash" its commercial aims. While Robbie and Gerwig considered the project a celebration of feminism and womanhood, Mattel executives were reluctant to use the 'F-word'. Robbie Brenner,

Mattel's first-ever executive producer, stated in an interview with Time magazine that Barbie was "not a feminist movie."

The brand collaborations are simply one aspect of the plastic feminism perpetrated by Mattel. In the backdrop of Mattel's success, China Labor Watch conducted an undercover investigation on Chang'an Mattel, a toy manufacturer in China, owned by Mattel in 2024. At the time of the investigation, the Chang'an factory was producing Barbie dolls. The findings revealed workplace conditions that violated local labor laws as well as five out of eight commitments listed in Mattel's Responsible Supply Chain Commitment (RSCC). These include "a culture of sexual harassment, absence of workplace accommodations for reproductive health needs, underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, low wages, workplace bullying" among other issues. This is in stark contrast to the mantra repeated by Mattel — "Barbie can be anything!"

Barbie's success at the box office was mirrored in the commercial success of the doll, which witnessed a 16% increase to \$605 million in 2024 when compared to the previous year. The film's monologue has deeply resonated with audiences, but beneath the shiny veneer of women's empowerment, Mattel has successfully orchestrated a rebranding strategy to lure newer generations into buying a commodified version of feminism.



Written By: Vasudha Sharma, Journalism, II Year
Artwork by: Adviteeya Rajvansh, Political Science, I Year

Man Goes to Space; Women Fight for Space

“As the mighty man sets off to find life on mars, to conquer another planet and colonise perhaps another species, women continue to navigate for space within public buses.”

Patriarchy consistently restricts women’s access to public spaces. Most state–authorized public areas such as parks, public transport, and monuments grapple with concerns over women’s safety. Issues of security, surveillance, and discrimination often lead to the disappearance of women from these spaces. While some women actively choose to avoid them, others are forced by their families to stay confined within their homes. As a result, the public sphere moulds itself into a domain for men, where they are not subjected to the same concerns. They navigate these environments freely, setting arbitrary norms that further deepen the spatial divide between genders.

Some argue for the creation of exclusive female spaces, however these spaces also tend to exist with the laws of patriarchy. All–girls schools and hostels are notorious for imposing strict surveillance on women—often enforced by women themselves. These environments pressure women to conform to rigid feminine ideals, stripping them of their individuality. While young girls are constantly taught how to dress modestly and protect themselves, young boys are rarely educated on how to treat women with respect. This creates a significant gap in learning how to socialize across genders.

Hostels often impose irrational curfews, while schools enforce severe dress codes under the guise of “protection.” If women fail to comply, they are met with shame and humiliation—tactics designed to make them feel responsible for their safety. This burden is starkly different from any other crime–related scenario, where the victim is rarely blamed for preventing harm.

Even within these controlled environments such as hostels and schools, women are expected to behave in ways that cater to male perceptions. In contrast, private male spaces not only allow but actively encourage men to disregard social norms, fostering “locker room” conversations that reinforce entitlement and objectification.

Men frequently discuss breaching women’s private spaces, constructing dangerous narratives that justify their presence and create a perceived need to “tame” women. The myth that women gather solely to judge, criticize, and shame each other fuels the flames of patriarchy and misogyny. Tragically, some women internalize these narratives, aligning themselves with the so–called “rational man” rather than the “hysterical woman.”

However, all–women’s colleges provide a different atmosphere. Here, the imposition of firm authority and constant surveillance takes a backseat. These spaces offer more than just education, they allow women to explore their identities outside the constraints of the male gaze. There is a natural sense of relief and comfort in being surrounded by other women, enabling them to open up emotionally and physically in a society that often forces them to shrink themselves to accommodate men. Women’s colleges also serve as platforms where students can freely express concerns that disproportionately affect them without being dismissed as overly sensitive or playing the victim.

Yet, even as these institutions provide a semblance of refuge, their existence does not erase the reality of the world outside. The rising harassment cases occurring just beyond their gates serve as a reminder that these spaces, too, remain vulnerable to patriarchal intrusion. Beyond these walls, men continue to impose their own rules without challenge, dictating who belongs and who does not. The creation of such institutions alone cannot dismantle patriarchy; true change demands that society reevaluate and reconstruct the very foundations of gendered norms in public life. Only then can women move beyond the illusion of safety and claim the world as their own.

Written by: Amna Haleem, History, II year
Edited by: Vanisha Tyagi, English, II year

Women are Mothers and Mothers are Women

“Women are mothers to daughters who, when they become women, mother.”

–Nancy Chowdrow

Aristotle once likened women to fertile land, the passive recipient of life, while men were the seed, providing form and essence. Women are land while men are the sky. Women nurture while men conquer. Motherhood is thus seen as natural, as instinctive. So much so, in fact, that nature is very frequently equated with motherhood. By juxtaposing mothers, and by extension women as a whole, with nature, we present motherhood as natural, as obvious.

One aspect of this naturalization is the relegation of women and by extension their issues or concerns to the realm of children and, subsequently, infancy. This makes itself felt through many cultural and political symptoms, such as the existence of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Why is it feasible to club together the affairs of women with those of children, which are two markedly distinct categories?

Sherry B. Ortner, in *Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture*, argues that the lactation process is seen as creating a “natural bond” between mother and child, rather than a mere feeding arrangement. Moreover, young children, not mobile enough for any work and unruly, require constant care and supervision. This becomes an extension of the duty of the mother due to her natal nursing bond, and she becomes confined to and associated with the domestic family.

As they are unsocialised, children are more likely to be associated with nature, and women, by their close association, also come to be seen as closer to nature. Hence, many initiation rites for boys include rituals that symbolise the purge of the defilement accumulated from being around mothers and women all the time.

The logical cumulation of the close association of women with the ‘natural’ is the binary of women with nature and men with culture. Since women become confined to the domestic sphere, they become identifiable with the lower order of socio-cultural organizations. They are simple, naive, innocent, and pure. This is in opposition to culture, which is complex and relatively removed from nature. Men are seen to lack a ‘natural basis’ that is essential for nursing and child care, and thus their realm of activities is located at the higher level, concerned with universalistic affairs as opposed to the lower-level, particularistic concerns of the domestic sphere.

Thus, men become the unsaid masters of religion, politics, spirituality, and culture while women are deemed fit for more biological and natural roles, such as cooking, child-rearing, and nurturing. Women are mothers, and mothers are women.

This centrality of a woman’s mothering is essential to the logic of male hegemony as it provides biologically deterministic and apparently ‘scientific’ arguments for the binary of gender roles. Motherhood is the ‘innate’ destiny of women. To choose otherwise—whether in pursuit of ambition, individuality, passions, or pleasures— is more often than not perceived as a futile denial of the obviousness of one’s feminine reality for women are mothers, and mothers are women.

Written by: Disha Bharti, Sociology, III Year
Edited By: Kaashavi Jatrana, Psychology, II Year

Chefs on Screen: The Par

45 degrees. It was all in the details — down to the temperature of the fork used — when it came to Gaku Kitada entering the frenzied culinary world. In the Japanese show, *Fermat's Cuisine*, or 'Fermat no Ryōri', Gaku, a mathematician at heart, changes gears and finds himself working under Michelin star chef, Kai Asakura, amidst the hope of a second chance. With the challenge of redefining himself and the excitement of a new-found path, he navigates his place in the multicultural kitchen of Restaurant K.

What *Fermat's Cuisine* is able to capture about professional kitchens is the nimble ingenuity of chefs working under a high pressure environment, and in the case of Michelin star establishments, even higher stakes. The show focuses on the journey of the math genius turned rising culinary star, but the underlying themes of kitchen dynamics, mentor-mentee relationships, and burdens of tradition are prevalent throughout.

Kai leaves the kitchen in the hands of the unprepared Gaku, and parallels can be drawn between his self-destructive nature and that of Chef Carmy from the popular series, *The Bear*. Both characters, though with vastly different levels of experience and approaches to their craft, are thrust into the role of a leader in a barely familiar kitchen environment, forced to deal with the trauma rooted in their relationships.

These shows paint an authentic, albeit tamed-for-TV, picture of the restaurant industry: both chefs are self-isolating — chasing a higher standard to exceed expectations, usually to their detriment. This depiction is a stark contrast to the polished 'cheffluencers' who have seen a rise in pop culture and social media, due to their role in democratising cooking. The power dynamics of a professional kitchen are blurred by the egalitarian nature of social media, where culinary experts are portrayed as just like the rest of us — only with additional skills and



adox of Culinary Media

the time to share them. Eight-year-old me grew up watching legends like Vikas Khanna on screen, while thirteen-year-old me had been privy to the kitchens of a stay-at-home mom of 6, a 20-something analyst with a passion for cooking, and a kid the same age as me, only with a million more followers.

What is interesting is that they strived to achieve authenticity as a way to connect with their audience, but needed striking visuals in their content to appease the algorithm. There is a sacred balance, and in maintaining that, they end up showing a more curated, manufactured image of their lives. Their kitchens are tidy, their hands pristine, their aprons spotless — deeply contrasting with the post-15-hour-shift restaurant chef, barely making a sandwich at home and calling it a day. There is value in creating food content, and that is evident not only from the wide audience it garners, but also from how it opens the door for home chefs (or

just about anybody interested) to build communities within the space. Now, it is possible for food enthusiasts to freely share their insights & experiences without the need to enter a gruelling, saturated industry. But what's clear is that there's no single 'realistic' way to capture the multifaceted world of cooking. As viewers, we must navigate these portrayals that both reveal and distort the reality of the culinary experience.

Written by: Meher Singh, Mathematics, I Year
Pictures By: Bhavya Korwal, Economics, II Year and Anvi Chawla, Economics, II Year



Mother Nature Needs Her Daughters:

Ecofeminism in Action

Reading headlines like ‘Climate Change is Here’, ‘Climate Crisis’, and ‘No Nurture, No Future’, while witnessing unprecedented wildfires and experiencing extreme weather, is a wake-up call we can no longer ignore. The question is not, ‘Are humans in a looming crisis right now?’ but rather, ‘Will future humans continue to exist?’ Yet, it’s not too late. If we choose to change course, we can make it better. It is up to us and always will be. The continuous degradation of our natural world is not just a crisis of resources but a reflection of a deeper, systemic failure—one rooted in the way we perceive and exploit both nature and marginalised communities, especially women. The climate crisis is far from “gender neutral”.

Ecofeminism isn’t just a theory—it’s a call to action. It exposes how the destruction of nature and the oppression of women stem from the same patriarchal mindset—one that glorifies control and domination. For centuries, men have been placed in the realm of reason and culture, while women—and nature—have been reduced to resources to be exploited. Cultural ecofeminism fights back. It reclaims the power of care, intuition, and fertility, not as weaknesses, but as strengths that can reshape the world. The path to justice—both social and ecological—starts with breaking these chains. Environmental preservation is not a separate cause but an intrinsic part of the struggle for gender and social justice.

A compelling illustration of this philosophy in action is visible in Meghalaya, where the relationship between women and nature is intertwined into the very cultural fabric of society. The matrilineal structure of Meghalaya empowers women, who in turn uphold a deep commitment to environmental conservation. This societal framework manifests as a quintessential living embodiment of valuing both women and nature, which is reflected in everyday rituals, traditions, and festivals. Central to this belief is the idea that mothers are the source of life, endowed with divine power.

The leadership role of Khasi mothers in environmental activism is visible across Meghalaya. A testament to this can be seen in Mawlynnong, Asia’s cleanest village, which is attributed to the diligent efforts of women. Likewise, the Nongkrem Dance Festival, a five-day religious celebration held in the Khasi Hills, is dedicated to the powerful Goddess Ka Blei Synshar, seeking her blessings for a bountiful harvest and the prosperity of the people. This reverence for the feminine divine mirrors the Khasi principle of valuing women and their intrinsic connection to nature, a tradition upheld by the Niam Khasi belief system. Some radical ecofeminists argue that tying women to nature frames environmental care as an inherent duty rather than a choice—romanticising women as “earth carers”, coercing additional environmental responsibility on top of domestic chores.

But the Khasi women challenge this narrative. Khasi women encapsulate a unique balance—where care is not coerced but embraced as an expression of cultural identity and ecological consciousness.

The Khasi way of life proves that sustainability isn’t just about policies or activism—it’s a way of being. True progress isn’t about endless growth; it’s about balance. A future worth living demands that we stop treating nature as a resource to exploit and start honouring it as a force to protect. If we want to thrive, the planet must thrive with us.

Written By: Jaisica Tanwar, BAP, II Year



Mothers and Marie Antoinette

Human beings are essentially intricate tapestries woven by the threads of their histories and biographies; women specifically get caught in a web of contradictions. They are not only a subject to a society that is structurally unjust to them, but also bear the weight of socialisation, and the onus of perpetuating the very values that constraint them. This often manifests as a paradox of a double-edged sword where they grow up in a world not made for their success and freedom and subsequently become the reinforcer of confining norms that shackle others.

Marie Antoinette was the Archduchess of Austria and became the Dauphine of France in 1770 with her marriage to Louis XVI that served as a political alliance between France and Austria. As she stepped onto French soil, she cast aside her Austrian heritage, her name and clothes were changed as if to shed the very essence of her past innocence of being a 14 year old girl. In that moment, she embraced a new womanhood, the weight of the French monarchy now resting upon her shoulders. The saying “Girls mature earlier than boys” is often a justification for the weight of the world that women bear from tender ages, a burden that stretches across cultures and history, whether it is the crown of responsibility placed upon Marie Antoinette or the household and childcare duties of mothers everywhere, this belief nurtures a legacy of misogyny, passed down through generations. This injustice gets internalised and embedded in women’s very fabric of being, a vicious cycle of unacknowledged labor and unrealized dreams, as it passes from mother to daughter.

Daughters often build resentment towards their mothers during their childhood, torn between love and the seemingly unyielding control of their mothers, who impose boundaries that shape them into the “respectable” women that the society demands. Such standards and bounds to girls’ behaviours often emerge as a product of age-old patriarchal customs; the mother, entrusted with the sacred duty of raising her children, becomes the gatekeeper of daughters’ morality. The mother-daughter bond has bittersweet complexity, with both sorrow and understanding. It

evokes feelings of sympathy for the daughter whose freedom and innocence of childhood are stolen by the weight of expectation, while an equally deep empathy arises for the mother who is a product of her time, who too suffered the same fate in her youth. In a way, the mother and daughter become reflections of each other at different points of their lives and with age as the daughter matures into motherhood herself, a poignant realization dawns, that her mother, once a girl with dreams and hopes of her own, became the keeper of those very societal norms that stifled her potential.

Queen Marie Antoinette was similarly characterised by her innocence, was caught in a world that she did not choose and was thrust into a role that she had little understanding and control over. Her extravagant tastes for jewels, fashion, gambling, and luxury, which flourished amid the financial ruin of France, became emblematic of her indifference to the suffering of the people. What began as a hopeful arrival in France soon soured, as she became the convenient scapegoat for the nation’s instability, ultimately casting her as one of the most despised women in French history. Rumors about sexual infidelity, immorality, her vain and spoiled nature and the popular quote (that she most likely never said) “let them eat cake” made her responsible for the events leading up to the French revolution. Pamphlets and libelles depicted Antoinette in with the confluence of pornography and misogyny, showing her to be promiscuous, having illegitimate children, being homosexual, and incestuous. Though her role in the political chaos leading to the Revolution remains debated, it’s undeniable that her image was distorted into a tool for popular outrage. In her final moments, as she was led to the guillotine, Marie Antoinette’s last words- “Pardonnez-moi, monsieur. Je ne l’ai pas fait exprès” (Pardon me, sir, I did not do it on purpose), spoken after she accidentally stepped on the executioner’s foot, echoed an unassuming nature, perhaps the final, poignant glimpse of a queen who had never fully grasped the weight of the world thrust upon her.

Written By: Paankhi Desai, Sociology, III Year
Edited By: Kaashavi Jatrana, Psychology, II Year
Artwork By: Urvika Dhaka, Psychology, III Year

Draupadi in Myth and

A Look into The

The Mahabharata presents Draupadi as one of the most formidable female figures in Indian mythology—proud, intelligent, and unwavering in her sense of justice. She is a woman who, despite being trapped in circumstances beyond her control, refuses to be reduced to a victim. However, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Palace of Illusions* reimagines her with modern sensibilities, adding layers of personal insecurities and emotional conflicts that, while making her more relatable, risk diluting her innate strength.

Draupadi is not merely a character in the Mahabharata; she is a force that drives the epic's central conflicts. While she has no control over being married to five men, she does not allow herself to be silenced or erased. She calls Yudhishtira a *kitava* (gambler) after he stakes her in a game of dice and, in doing so, refuses to accept fate without protest. This moment is crucial because it shows that Draupadi is not the silent, suffering wife. She is a woman who demands accountability and who refuses to stand by when injustice is done to her.

Even in her most vulnerable moment—her disrobing in the Kaurava court—she does not behave like a woman who is pleading for help. Instead, she wields her dignity like a weapon. She questions the legitimacy of Yudhishtira's bet, forcing the assembly to confront their own complicity in the crime. Her righteousness is so overpowering that it shifts the reader's gaze away from the horror of the moment and onto the moral failure of those who remain silent. This is a crucial aspect of Draupadi's power—she does not make the audience pity her; she forces them to reckon with their own sense of justice.

Draupadi's strength is not just in her words but in the loyalty she commands. Bhima, in particular, is deeply devoted to her—he is the only Pandava who does not hesitate to take action for her. His vow to kill Dushasana and drink his blood is not just an act of vengeance; it is a testament to the force of Draupadi's fury. Even Krishna's intervention in the *vastraharan* is not framed as an act of saving a helpless woman, but as a moment where divine justice responds to Draupadi's unyielding demand for dignity.

Draupadi's suffering is political, not personal. She does not long for love or question her choices—she is too busy demanding retribution. She is a woman wronged, but she is never a woman in need.

Divakaruni's novel takes a different approach, attempting to make Draupadi more relatable by adding layers of introspection, self-doubt, and an imagined romantic longing for Karna. This psychological depth may make her feel more modern, but it also alters the very nature of her character. The Draupadi of the Mahabharata does not spend time wondering about love or feeling torn between different men—her struggles are far greater than that.

One of the most controversial additions to *The Palace of Illusions* is Draupadi's supposed love for Karna. Nowhere in the Mahabharata is there any suggestion that Draupadi harboured feelings for him. If anything, their relationship is defined by hostility and wounded pride. Draupadi refuses to let Karna compete in her *swayamvara*, reinforcing his resentment. In turn, Karna publicly humiliates her during the dice game, calling her a *vaishya* (low-born woman) and suggesting she be treated as a prostitute. Their dynamic is one of confrontation, not hidden longing.

By inserting an unspoken love between them, *The Palace of Illusions* introduces an unnecessary emotional conflict that diminishes Draupadi's character. Draupadi does not need to be emotionally torn between love and duty to be



Modern Retellings:

Palace of Illusions



compelling. Her story is already rich with complex relationships—her bond with Bhima, who is her fiercest protector, and her connection with Arjuna, who originally won her hand, are enough to carry the weight of her personal struggles. The addition of a longing for Karna creates a love triangle that ultimately weakens her narrative by making her seem indecisive, a trait that is entirely absent in the Mahabharata. an unnecessary emotional conflict that diminishes Draupadi's character. Draupadi does not need to be emotionally torn between love and duty to be compelling. Her story is already rich with complex relationships—her bond with Bhima, who is her fiercest protector, and her connection with Arjuna, who originally won her hand, are enough to carry the weight of her personal struggles. The addition of a longing for Karna creates a love triangle that ultimately weakens her narrative by making her seem indecisive, a trait that is entirely absent in the Mahabharata.

Draupadi does not need to be softened or made more vulnerable to be compelling. Her appeal lies in the fact that she is a rare figure in mythology—a woman who does not waver, who does not seek sympathy, but who forces the world to reckon with its own injustices.

Draupadi's anger is what makes her radical. Mythology in patriarchal traditions rarely allows women to be figures of defiance without consequence. Draupadi is one of the few exceptions—a woman who openly calls out injustice. Her anger is not just personal—it is cosmic. It is the catalyst for the greatest war in Hindu mythology.

Yet, modern retellings often struggle to preserve this kind of raw, untamed power in female characters. There seems to be an urge to make strong women relatable by giving them insecurities, romantic dilemmas, and moments of doubt. But why should a woman's strength be softened in order to be understood? Draupadi does not need to struggle with self-worth.

Draupadi's dark skin is an integral part of her identity, not a source of insecurity. The Mahabharata never suggests that she was ashamed of her complexion or that others looked down on her for it. Instead, she is called Krishnaa, a name that not only describes her skin but also aligns her with Lord Krishna, reinforcing her divine presence and strength. By portraying her as insecure about her darkness, retellings like *The Palace of Illusions* impose modern colourist struggles onto a character who, in the original text, carried herself with unwavering confidence. This misrepresentation does a disservice to dark-skinned readers by reinforcing the idea that darker skin is something to be overcome rather than simply embraced. It also falsely suggests that self-assurance alone can dismantle societal biases—that if one walks with confidence, society will automatically follow. In reality, systemic prejudices do not dissolve through individual self-acceptance alone, and narratives that simplify this struggle risk erasing the deeper realities of colourism that persist today.

Draupadi is not a woman in need of saving—she is the reason men swear vengeance, the reason a war is fought, and the reason history is rewritten. Any retelling that reduces her to a pitiable figure in search of love risks taking away what makes her truly remarkable. In an era where women's voices are still fighting to be heard, perhaps we do not need a Draupadi who questions herself. We need the Draupadi who stands unshaken, who burns with righteous fury, and who reminds us that history belongs to those who refuse to be silent.

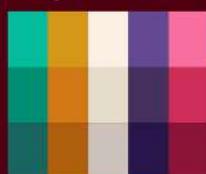
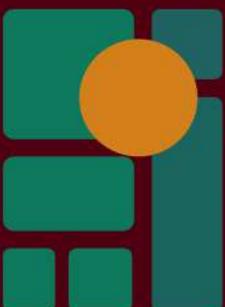
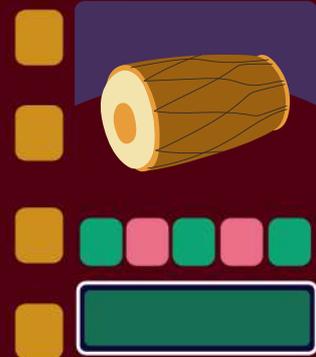
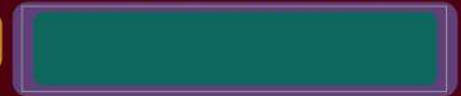
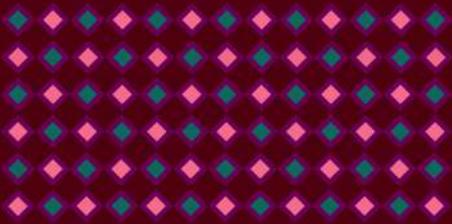
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An Heirloom of Feminist Heritage: *My Grandmother's Tale of Resilience and Revolution*

A free-willed daughter's soul is forged in a kiln that runs on the heat of the burning fire of courage and determination of the generations of women that preceded her. As a rebellious daughter, I considered all the women in my family as my cerebral foils. Only when my Vice Principal told me (on the publication of my most popular article) "You are a strong girl. You must have been raised by a strong mother," I had some semblance of realisation of the warrior spirit of the women whose experiences have shaped my feminine being. The most important among them has to be my grandmother.

My grandmother was a feminist icon when this term was unavailable for public consumption the way it is today. My maternal grandmother, Dr. Renu Mishra, is the daughter of the 1995 Kendriya Sahitya Academy Award winner for his literary critique, Shri Govind Chandra Udgata, and holds a PhD in Odiya from Sambalpur University. A retired Principal, my grandmother's story is her own, but the ladder of her success is built on the rungs of a domino of valiant actions of her parents, in-laws, husband, and spouse.

Born in 1941 as Renu Udgata, my grandmother was the eldest of 8 siblings and one of seven daughters. She was raised in a household where her grandfather wished for her to be married but her father would put his foot down, striving against child marriage for any of his daughters. He would save pennies, living a minimalist life so that all his daughters could be educated and not just parcelled to the houses of strangers as brides and trapped in a cycle of violence and servitude till death. From an infant who received her first marriage proposal at 1.5 years old to one who refused to marry until she had completed her master's degree and only if she was allowed to work post-marriage, my grandmother had a transformational journey. Her mother, Saraswati Udgata was a silent cheerleader, an unsung supporter for most of her life, sewing clothes for her daughters, encouraging them to sing and dance, and supporting my grandmother when she re-

turned to work after her first maternity leave.

It is ironic how a pallu covering her head was a symbol of dignity for my grandmother, while it lies on the top of my list of things I abhor as a woman. For my grandmother, her middle school teachers, who balanced the roles of being a wife and educator, with a dignified veil over their head, were her role models. She would stand and address large crowds that included male subordinates, deriving power from her pallu. She says, that the only restriction she ever faced was one she deemed a beacon of safety, that she was to be accompanied either by her husband or her sister-in-law to public gatherings. Her defiant actions received a range of reactions from women: From the comic breaking of pots borne by women as their jaw dropped when they saw her cycling, to the gazes of admiration of housewives who lounged in their verandas in the afternoon, looking at my grandmother returning from school, while their daughters remained confined to the mundanes of domesticity.

My grandmother's courage has permeated through generations, into her daughters who have both completed master's degrees and are successful teachers today; to my sister and me who make difficult decisions every day to pave our way in a world that was not built for women. My grandmother's journey is a testament to her greatest quality: to see every roadblock as a rock to hop over or scamper about, a trait that I only noticed once I interviewed her for this article. When I find myself at the crossroads of modernity and tradition, her legacy acts as a guiding light. Through her story, I have learnt the silent rebellion that is the conviction of choice and sincerity of work, and while I may reject the feminine symbols that define her, I have inherited her spirit and learned from her anecdotes more than I can fathom.

Written by: Swonshutaa Dash, English, I Year

Rooms that Remember

If you were to mention the words ‘college hostel’ in a room full of third-year students, chances are, half of them would light up. A floodgate of stories would soon follow, full of friendship, shenanigans and unforgettable moments.

Growing up, I always had a certain image in my mind of what my college life would look like. A major part of that vision revolved around the college hostel. Whether it was the countless stories from my parents, movies like *3 Idiots* that I’d grown up watching, or even a book my dad’s friend had written about his hostel life, I entered college with great expectations.

However, when I joined LSR, I quickly realized that my dream of staying in a college hostel would remain unfulfilled. So I opted for the next best thing, a near-by PG (paying guest accommodation). The location was ideal—close to college, with most residents being from LSR. I thought, What more could I want?

Yet, something still felt amiss. There was a sense of detachment and a lack of belonging that I couldn’t shake off. Perhaps I was still too new, I reasoned. Then, one day, as I was walking around the campus, I stumbled upon the old hostel building. That is when it hit me—the significance of living on the college premises. Being on campus 24/7, and having a space to call your own must have been an incredibly special experience.

Intrigued, I set out to talk to as many former hostel residents as possible. Each conversation felt like stepping into a time capsule, unlocking cherished memories and stories that painted a vivid picture of their time there.

From someone’s phone getting broken at the New Year’s Eve party to a group of friends crying at 3 a.m. for no reason at all, rolling around in the back lawns when they were closed off for everyone else, playing Uno in random corners of the college or a two-hour-long fight over a stolen KitKat bar—each conversation felt like stepping through a doorway to the past. “I just miss having a friend all the time,” a senior confided in me. The college hostel had fostered effortless friendships, creating a strong sense of community and belonging.

It was the kind of place where you could run into someone at the water cooler and end up talking for an hour and where you share your fondest memories and

your hardest battles with people you just met a week ago.

Starting college is complicated. We’re all freshly out of school, stepping into the ‘real world’—for many of us, in an entirely new city. We’re trying to figure out who we are, what we want to do, and how we fit into the grand scheme of things. Having the hostel experience made this transition easier. You didn’t have to worry about food, safety, or even the stock of groceries in your kitchen, you always had the weekly ‘Peeli dal, Kaale Chane and Hari Chutney’. The hostel gave you a space that was truly yours and, with it, the freedom to grow and explore.

Even academically, hostel life had its advantages. Whenever there was a break between classes or even during fests if one got tired, one had the option of simply retreating to their rooms for a break and was able to return feeling refreshed. There was also an exclusive hostel library where most students regularly studied, bonded with people across departments, cried about not getting internships and sat down to do their SEC, VAC and AEC assignments together.

In many ways, the college hostel fostered a unique, tight-knit community among its residents. It wasn’t just a place to live; it was where students built lifelong friendships, experienced personal growth, and truly embraced their college journey. Every person I spoke to for this piece spoke of the hostel with immense fondness and a longing for that time in their lives. I can only hope that, whether for our batch or future generations of Elsas, we, too, can one day experience this beautiful chapter of college life.

Written by: Jiya Pahade, Journalism, I Year
Image Credits: Khushi Joshi, Psychology, II Year



ADHD or Just Life Today? The Battle for Our Attention

There was a time when we were just distracted. Now, we are *ADHD*. Or at least, that's what we've convinced ourselves. Scrolling endlessly through our phones, jumping from one unfinished task to another, finding it impossible to read a book without checking messages every five minutes—we joke that our attention spans have been shattered. But is this really ADHD, or is it just the symptom of living in an age that demands we be everywhere at once?

It is almost comical how casually we throw around the term. “I have ADHD,” we say when we can't focus on an assignment. “I need dopamine,” we declare, opening yet another social media app. It's an easy label, a convenient shorthand for the state of overstimulation we exist in. But in our rush to diagnose ourselves, are we trivializing the real struggles of those who live with ADHD?

A Clinical Condition vs. A Cultural Crisis

The American Psychiatric Association defines Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as a neurodevelopmental condition marked by persistent patterns of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity that interfere with daily life. It isn't just about being easily distracted—it's about a fundamental difference in brain function. Those with ADHD don't just struggle with procrastination; they battle executive dysfunction, time blindness, and an internal restlessness that makes the simplest tasks feel insurmountable. For them, “just focusing” is as impossible as “just seeing” is to someone with severe myopia. Yet, our collective experience of fractured focus is undeniable. We exist in a world that is designed to splinter our attention. Social media platforms thrive on our inability to concentrate, deploying infinite scrolls and notification pings like weapons of mass distraction. The news cycle moves at breakneck speed, demanding that we keep up or risk falling behind. Even universities and workplaces, institutions meant to cultivate deep thought, expect rapid output with little space for real engagement. The ability to sit with a single thought, uninterrupted, has become a privilege. In a world where everything demands our attention, it's no wonder we all feel like we have none to give.



Hijacked Attention: The Business of Distraction

The late writer David Foster Wallace, in *Infinite Jest*, foresaw a future where entertainment would become so addicting that people would be unable to turn away, losing themselves completely. That dystopia feels eerily familiar today—TikTok’s infinite scroll, YouTube’s algorithmic rabbit holes, the dopamine hits of Instagram notifications. Nir Eyal, who wrote *Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products*, later authored *Indistractable* as a warning against the very addiction-driven systems he once helped create.

But is the issue just about technology? Historian Johann Hari, in *Stolen Focus*, argues that our collective attention crisis isn’t just the fault of social media—it’s systemic. From the way we overwork ourselves to the way our education systems prioritize rote learning over curiosity, modern life is structured in a way that makes deep focus increasingly rare.

This is not to say ADHD is a myth—far from it. Figures like Simone Biles, Michael Phelps, and Emma Watson have spoken openly about their ADHD diagnoses, offering insight into how it shapes their lives. But conflating our collective struggle with focus with a clinical disorder does a disservice to those who navigate its real challenges.

Reclaiming Our Attention

So, what do we do with this? Perhaps the answer lies in distinguishing between the clinical and the circumstantial. If you suspect you have ADHD, seeking a professional diagnosis is crucial. But if your inability to concentrate stems from a world that never lets you rest, the solution may not be Ritalin but resistance—resistance against a culture that equates busyness with worth, that glorifies multitasking, that makes us feel guilty for simply existing in silence. Jaron Lanier, one of Silicon Valley’s earliest critics, suggests that reclaiming our focus is an act of rebellion. To read a book uninterrupted, to sit with our own thoughts, to step away from the digital noise—these are radical acts in an economy built on distraction.

Maybe our problem isn’t that we’re all ADHD. Maybe our problem is that we live in an era that never lets us be still.

Written By: Kaashavi Jatrana, Psychology, II Year



From Bronx Streets

Throughout history, music has played an instrumental role in providing a voice to various cultures. While American hip-hop originated as a response to struggles like racism and discrimination and celebration of Black culture, Punjabi music similarly evolved to provide a voice to a community shaped by migration, cultural pride, and events like anti-Sikh riots of 1984.

The last two decades have witnessed considerable overlap between the two, with Punjabi artists incorporating rap verses, hip-hop beats and other elements of hip-hop music into their songs. Globalisation and the Punjabi diaspora, particularly in Canada, are key factors of this fusion. Cities like Brampton, often referred to as “Little Punjab,” have become hubs where Punjabi artists blend both genres. The earliest instances of this fusion were visible in the late 90s and early 2000s, in the tracks of Canadian Punjabi Jazzy-B and British-Indian Punjabi MC.

Leading artists like AP Dhillon, Shubh, and Karan Aujla (until recently) are based out of Canada. Living in these countries not only provides access to a global platform but also exposes them to hip-hop culture. Sidhu Moosewala repeatedly cited Tupac Shakur as his inspiration and wrote a song called ‘The Last Ride’ as a tribute to him. British Indian singer Punjabi MC even collaborated with Jay-Z to create a chart-topping remix of the song ‘Mundiyan To Bach Ke’.

Both genres use music to tell stories exploring themes like cultural identity, pride and communal expression. Hip-hop rooted in cultural expression, naturally embodies these themes. Kendrick Lamar’s DNA, a key ex-

DIL

GOAT



to Brampton Studios



ample, explores the Black identity by highlighting common experiences like racism. Similarly, pride and heritage have long been ingrained in the Punjabi culture. Diljit's song 'Born to Shine' with phrases like "Jatt paida hoya bas chhaun vaste." (Jatt is born to shine) reflects the same.

Furthermore, hip-hop has emerged as a voice for the oppressed, discriminated and socio-economically disadvantaged Black neighbourhoods. Likewise, several renowned Punjabi artists hail from rural and working-class backgrounds, where financial difficulties are a significant part of life. Their songs with themes of resilience, perseverance and hard work, are a reflection of this. Whether it's Drake's Started from the Bottom or Karan Aujla's 'Sifar Safar,' emphasis on the journey from humble beginnings to worldwide success by overcoming hardships, resonates with listeners who see their struggles reflected in the music.

There is common criticism as well. AP Dhillon's reference to "Katta Bihari" (local gun) and Karan Aujla's song 'Weed' has been criticised for glorifying violence and substance use which further reinforces toxic masculinity. Although Hip-hop for the longest time was criticised for glorifying gang culture, substance use and misogyny, it has now evolved beyond it. One can only expect the same from Punjabi music by focusing more on themes like self-made success and cultural celebration.

The ability of music to transcend borders helps shape its universal appeal. It provides a voice to various marginalised communities, shapes narratives and unites people across the world. The parallel between the Bronx streets and Brampton studios is a testament to this.

*Written by: Aadhya Khanna, BA Programme, I Year
Artwork By: Asmi Chawla, Economics, II Year*

Have You Been Thrifting?



The originality of thought is often overshadowed by a genealogy of inherited emotions and experiences. As much as we wish to forge individuality, history is inseparable from identity. Consciously or not, we've all been thrifting in aisles of amorphous emotions curated by our ancestors for centuries. There's an intimacy to thrifting that often slips out of notice. The act of owning something that might have meant the world to someone at some point and then redefining it into yours

feels strange. The pieces I discard and forsake were once adored and prized. And yet, is that not how we experience emotions too?

The initial years of my mother's married life were tainted with her experiences of torment and terror at the hands of my grandmother, whose exaggerated reports and unrealistic expectations were often the cause of commotion between my parents. Interestingly, a conversation with my grandmother would reveal that they've had indistinguishable experiences. Her experiences too, were laced with similar distress and chaos with her mother-in-law. While those times are long gone, they linger in parallels she doesn't realise.

A theory in psychological research— emotional contagion, elucidates how we often unconsciously mirror and adopt the emotions of those around us. Much like yawns on a lazy afternoon, emotions are contagious. My heart is often filled with rage upon hearing my friend rant about her misfortunes.

Our ability to sympathise with strangers or the way we adopt the gestures and vocabulary of the people we love is perhaps what connects us. Last week I draped a thrifted scarf around my neck the same way my mother used to on cold school mornings. Both the scarf and the gesture are pre-loved yet I end up embracing them as mine entirely.

Grief, yearning and gratitude all sculpt a palette that paints on a palimpsest layered with generations of experiences. However, despite their second-hand nature, they rarely ever feel borrowed. While our shared experiences may transcend the concept of personal, we end up customising them with minor details. The bifurcation of shared and personal manifests in the form of expressions. Love, for instance, is an emotion known to all, yet we each have our language for display. Under the wooden frame of my bed lies a box full of letters from my loved ones. My palm is shaped by the curve of every hand it has held. Each word in those letters, each touch imprinted on my skin, is entirely my own. In these quiet remnants of love, I find my traces in every word, every touch, every unspoken gesture. As I entwine new meaning into what I feel, I know that one-day parts of me will live on in someone else, just as unknowingly, just as inevitably.

Written by: Jasmeh Kaur, Journalism, I Year

The Many Lives Of A Name

Before language, there was only sound. And then, we named things, the sky, the river, the fire. And then, we named each other. A word carved out of breath, carrying more than just meaning, carrying the weight of recognition. To be named is to be known.

Good names belong to the world, pressed into paper, signed in ink, called out in waiting rooms and exam halls. But nicknames, they belong to something smaller, something softer. A name to be held between teeth, to be thrown across a room in laughter, to be murmured in half-sleep. They are the names that never make it to passports or résumés but are carried in the mouths of those who love us.

I never had a nickname. Only the title 'Bauwa', small child. A name that wasn't really mine but something I borrowed until my brother was born, until it was passed down like an old shirt. My parents tried to stitch it back together with 'Bada', a big one, but it never fit quite right. Some names are too loose, slipping off before they can be held.

But some names never fade. My grandmother called my father by his childhood name until her last breath, as if in her voice, he could always remain that boy. My mother's nickname still lingers in the mouths of her siblings, because for them, she has never been anyone else.

I wanted that kind of name. The kind that bends, that survives. Once, a friend called me Dodo. It felt absurd, small, something to be cupped in two hands. And then one day, they left, and the name left with them. Nicknames are like that—they require two people to exist.

Over time, my name fractured into versions of itself, stretched and softened by accents, by mispronunciations, by moods. Some people let the last letter linger, others say it like a command. Some mistake me for another faith, another place, another person entirely. A name can be a home, but it can also be a disguise.

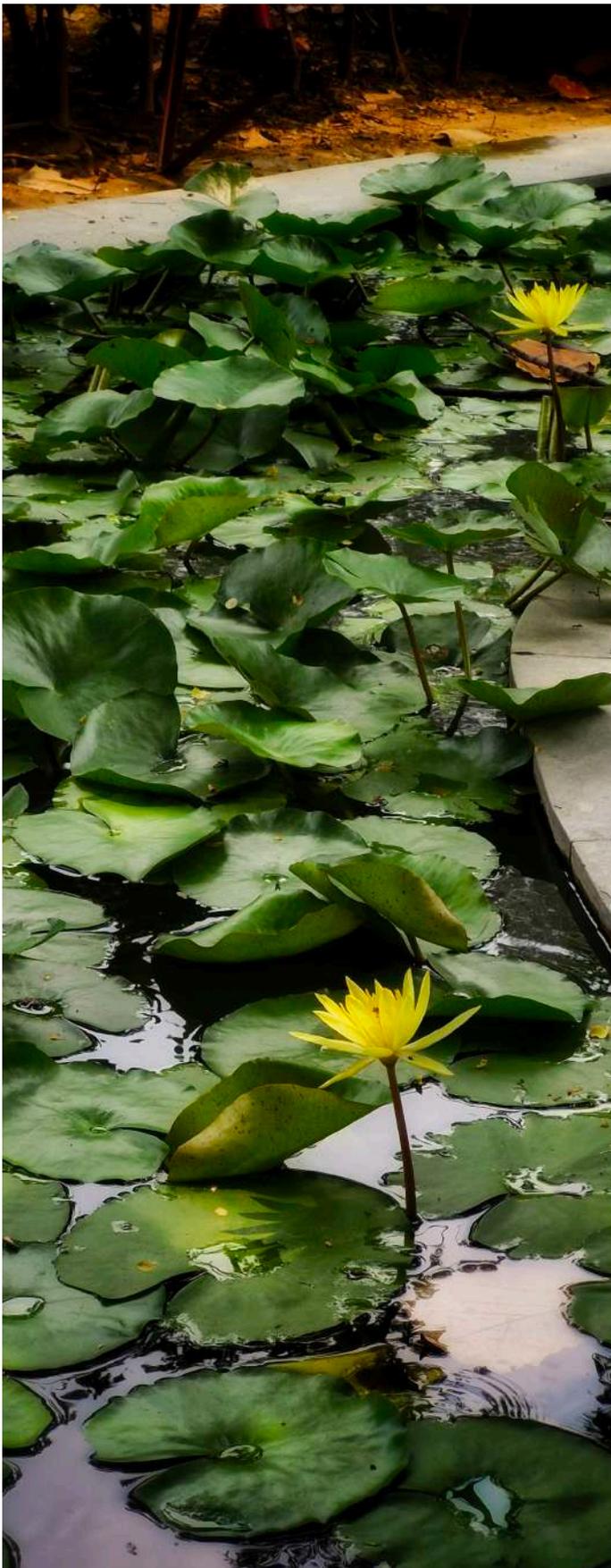
And yet, a name is never just a name. In college, it becomes a first introduction, a social experiment, a badge of belonging. It is shortened, remixed, reclaimed. It is written in group chats and scrawled on coffee cups. It is whispered in the dark, screamed across hallways, forgotten, remembered, misspelled, misheard.

Maybe that's the point. That a name, like a person, is meant to change. That it is never just one thing. That the truest names are the ones that survive in the mouths of those who love us, however they choose to say them. That in the end, a name is not just a word, but a small defiance against forgetting.

Written by: Ami Kushwaha, Psychology, II Year
Artwork By: Udit Paliwal, Psychology, II Year



The Cost of Everything



Nothing ever really comes free. So when writing about “Everything”, it’s fitting to discuss a human cost that comes with everything; being tired. As you read this piece, you’re most likely tired of something. And as I write this, I am too.

The concept note for this edition of the LSR College Magazine acknowledges that we all lead “deeply complex and emotional lives”, and what is more universal a feeling than exhaustion. As a student, today I write about it in the context of students.

My fellow students are tired— tired of academic pressures, of commutes to college that may stretch well beyond an hour or two, of looking for internships to level up their resumé, of keeping up a balanced lifestyle while also managing personal relationships that seem to only complicate as we grow older, and so much more. We’re so tired of everything, aren’t we?

One thing however, is common amongst these instances, a Dream. We work harder and harder for higher scores to perhaps pursue a degree at our dream institution. We commute daily, despite the fatigue, to come to college, which was once a dream that many of us manifested for years. We do internships, we look for jobs, in the pursuit of achieving financial independence and fulfilling dreams, not just of our own, but also those of our families. As twenty year olds, we try to navigate our lives and relationships to reach that dream lifestyle we’ve had on our vision boards.

So, are we tired of everything or tired of trying to achieve “everything”? As young people, the dream that we aspire to fulfill often means an ideal “everything” to us. In the face of obstacles, it’s what keeps us going. Nevertheless, the cost of it is that we find ourselves tired and exhausted. On some days, it feels like a price too heavy to pay.

On these days, it’s good to pause, to take a break, to take it easy. The journey towards ambition often feels like a relentless race but at the end of the day, we’re only human. So when you find yourself tired, be sure to remind yourself that exhaustion is a proof of progress — you’re only getting closer to having everything you’ve ever dreamt of.

*Written By: Aditi Sahoo, Political Science , III Year
Image Credits: Harshita Nareda, History, I Year*

From the Daughter of a Gynaecologist :

A PSA on Reproductive Health

Since childhood, my mother taught me that the female body was not a mystery but a map—one my gynaecologist mother navigated with clinical precision and empathy. Our dinner conversations were punctuated with her stories: a teenager too ashamed to admit she'd had sex, a woman blaming herself for her partner's infidelity, a patient with untreated HPV who never knew her boyfriend lied about his sexual history. These were warnings etched into my bones. "The world punishes women for having desires," my mother once said, "but never asks why those desires are dangerous to begin with."

Outside our home, I learnt sex was framed as shameful, risky, and for men. Society polices women's sexuality like a religion—purity until marriage, then instant vixenhood. But my mother's patients revealed a darker truth: women are shamed for having sex; men are celebrated for it. Young women still whisper apologies for needing STI tests, while men brag about unprotected conquests.

Dating apps promised liberation but delivered transactional intimacy. "Netflix and chill" became code for "I'll love-bomb you for nudes." Matches become ghosts at the mention of an STI status. A friend contracted herpes from a man who swore he was "clean" and was told, "You should've known what you signed up for." Algorithms reward men; women calculate risks with every swipe: Will he violate me? Film me? Give me something I can't cure?

My mother's clinic walls hold secrets. A college athlete gaslit his girlfriend into blaming herself for his chlamydia. A man hid his HIV status from three partners. Biology is merciless: HPV clings to us longer, fertility threats loom, and "I'm on the pill" becomes code for "Don't worry about my health or well-being."

Last year, a patient came to my mother requesting labiaplasty. At 22, she'd never had sex but was convinced her body was "ugly" after comparing herself to porn. "I just want to feel normal," she cried. Cosmetic gynaecology is booming—a \$1.3 billion industry—yet another way women are told their bodies are flawed, their

other way women are told their bodies are flawed, their worth tied to male approval.

We're told we're "liberated" now—that thirst traps and kinks mean we've won. But why does modern "empowerment" feel like a rebranded cage? The rise of extreme kinks—choking, degradation, slapping—isn't a coincidence. It's the eroticisation of female pain, repackaged as agency. A patient once asked my mother, "Is it normal to cry after sex? He says it's just roleplay." When did liberation become synonymous with enduring brutality?

True autonomy isn't about how loudly we perform desire—it's about who holds the power to define it. It's teaching girls to say "condom" without flinching. It's men facing accountability for lies. It's admitting "sex positivity" fails when it centres on male pleasure. My mother's work wasn't just Pap smears; it was restoring dignity. "Your body isn't a negotiation," she'd say. "It's your sovereignty."

If I have a daughter, I'll tell her this: your desire is not a crime. Your safety is not a turnoff. Liberation isn't found in choking or being called a slut—it's the right to say "no" without apology and "yes" without fear. Sex remains a transaction where women pay the higher price—physically, emotionally, and socially. Until we confront this, until we stop masking inequality with the illusion of choice, the risks will outweigh the rewards. Women deserve better—not just the illusion of control, but real, tangible autonomy over their bodies and desires.

Written by: Kyra Kashyap, English, I Year

Echoes Beyond Red Glass: LSR's Disability Community

LSR is a rich tapestry woven from the threads of its students, faculty, and staff, with each individual carrying a distinct story. But beneath the red brick walls lies a deeper narrative—one of struggle, resilience, and identity.

As students, we are called to be bold in our quest for knowledge, justice, and truth—to step beyond these walls, unafraid and unapologetic in our pursuit of equity. It is in this spirit that I turn to the disability community at LSR, a space often overlooked, yet filled with voices that demand to be heard—not just as disabled individuals, but as scholars, artists, and changemakers.

Each story is an archive of resilience, aspiration, and the pursuit of visibility. In a fast-paced world where each day presents itself as a step toward modernity, it is easy to overlook how deeply ingrained mindsets and their manifestations persist. True change comes not from mere acceptance, but from recognition. To understand disability, we must rethink its place in society. Too often, we accept rigid norms without question. But we must step beyond these invisible thresholds—to ask, listen, and unlearn.

Over time, Buddies have expanded their understanding of disability—from purely physical to include psychological, neurodivergent, sensory, and invisible disabilities. Some argue it does not exist within individuals at all but is constructed through inaccessibility, exclusion, and ignorance—embedded in the architecture of our cities, the design, the technology, and the language we use. Many have been labelled “differently” or “specially” abled when all they seek is to feel “normal.” But if “normal” exists only to exclude, does it exist at all? Instead, we must recognise disability as part of human diversity, not a deviation from it.

Many Buddies do not view their impairments as inherent barriers to success; rather, they see the true obstacle in society's response to disability. While their disability may not directly dictate their opportunities, its after-effects—embedded into their identity in complex and

multidimensional ways—inevitably shape their experiences. Their disabilities mould, but do not confine, their ambitions. They are students first—singers, writers, athletes, future psychologists and advocates. Yet, for many, the journey is riddled with barriers, both visible and invisible. Bullying is a frequent experience, especially for those with visual and psychological disabilities.

Beyond campus, scrutiny extends to societal expectations—where relatives and the larger community often reduce them to their impairments, questioning their future in marriage, work, and social contribution. While some find unwavering support in family and friends, others face confusion and resistance. Teachers and counsellors often become pillars of strength, offering advocacy when society fails them. Some conceal their disabilities for mental peace, while others embrace them as an intrinsic part of their identity.

While some feel pressure to prove themselves more than their able-bodied peers, they remain firm in their self-belief. Disability, for them, is not a definition—it is an aspect of their being, influencing but not determining their lives. Their journeys may differ in form, but their ambitions burn just as bright. While navigating accessibility can be exhausting and, at times, deeply frustrating, many find empowerment in the very challenges they face.

For some, assistive technology provides greater independence, but for those from underprivileged backgrounds, accessibility remains an uphill battle. This is where advocacy becomes crucial—not just in marginalised spaces but also in elite institutions like LSR. Many Buddies express gratitude for LSR's existing support structures. But we tread a path only half-travelled, with miles beyond the horizon still waiting to unfold. Training sessions for professors on disability awareness, Braille resources, digital accessibility, and better information dissemination are just a few areas where gaps persist.

As a marginalised community whose access to opportunities is often contingent on the awareness and actions of

our able-bodied peers, we must reclaim our own narratives and agency. For many, empowerment is rooted in awareness and inclusion on a larger scale. But on a personal level, it is about setting boundaries and being seen as individuals beyond their disabilities. While some are placed on a pedestal for being capable “despite” their disabilities, others are underestimated because of them. But now, they present their case—not for more, not for less, but simply for the same—to stand as equals, sharing the same space.

The echoes of their experiences ripple far beyond the red glass of LSR. Many look within to find diversity, but the truth lies deeper. Rising from the fractures in the glass, their voices urge us to listen, learn, and advocate for true inclusion—not as a perfunctory aid, but as a fundamental right.



Written by: Vanisha Tyagi, English, II Year

COLDPLAY's Concert as a Testa

India recently witnessed the highly anticipated 5-day mega Coldplay Music Of The Spheres Tour. The band's performance was a cultural phenomenon that brought together people from all walks of life— whether they were hardcore fans, casual listeners, or first-time concertgoers.

Coldplay has had a loyal fanbase worldwide for years now, but this unprecedented demand for tickets in India was unexpected. The impact of their music and the pull of a once-in-a-lifetime experience transcended their regular followers. I, for one, was one of them.

Call it FOMO or peer pressure, everyone wanted to be a part of this international-scale spectacle, experience the electric atmosphere, and witness a globally renowned band perform live. As an attendee of the Mumbai show, I can wholeheartedly confirm that every moment was truly worth it.

You didn't need to know every lyric by heart or map every song to its album. When Chris Martin sang Paradise, or the intro of A Sky Full of Stars was played, it was enough to unite the crowd. It was fascinating to see people's faces lighting up when they heard that one lyric, lost in nostalgia for moments once cherished. Some songs reminded people of their loved ones and the people they have lost. This was the real magic in Coldplay's music—the power to make people feel something real.

Fans argued that only 'real' fans deserved concert tickets, upset that others who knew only a few trending songs got them instead. I disagree. Everyone deserves to enjoy art. Unfortunately, we don't live in a utopia where art is accessible to everyone—financial and social roadblocks exist. Fans



ment to the Unifying Power of Art

And if you were to ask me, After all that we've been through "Still believe in magic?"

Oh, yes, I do

~ Magic, Ghost Stories



who aren't perceived as "dedicated enough" often face gatekeeping from those who believe deeper knowledge or longer devotion to an artist grants greater entitlement to a magical experience.

At the concert, I was surrounded by thousands. As I stood beneath a sky that exploded into heart-shaped firecrackers through the lens of my moon goggles, I witnessed dreams turn into reality. The outro of Fix You surged through my veins, every note electrifying as if everything in my life had led to this very moment. And somehow, in the midst of it all, I felt complete. It didn't matter that I wasn't with the 'love of my life' or even my closest friends. The music, the lights, the energy of the crowd—it wrapped around me, overwhelming yet intoxicatingly comforting. For the first time in a long time, everything felt okay.

Art has an unparalleled power to unite people, going beyond what lies at the surface, regardless of the so-called differences between us as human beings. Music, in particular, has a way of forging connections between people that go beyond any fandom. Coldplay's concert in India was a testament to this power—five nights when strangers sang together and witnessed love, something.

Coldplay truly stands for. In a country as diverse as ours, those nights under the open sky reminded us of something deeper: that humans need to feel, to belong, and to celebrate together. Whether you were a devoted fan or just someone caught in the magic, Coldplay's music became the common language that spoke to all.

Written by: Saanvi Dudeja, Economics, I Year

Imperfect Being

The day had been long, dragging on like a heavy sigh. I sat by the school gate, watching the world move around me as I waited for my father. My friends stood nearby, talking and laughing—mostly at me.

“You’re such a kid,” one of them scoffed, grinning mockingly. “Who even acts like that anymore?”

I only smiled, letting their words drift past me. Was it really childish to hum a tune, to relish stillness, to not be in a constant rush like the rest of the world? They saw immaturity; I felt content.

The wait stretched on, minutes feeling like hours, until finally, my father’s car pulled up. I climbed in, barely settling into the seat before he spoke.

“You really need to grow up,” he said, shaking his head. “Always lost in your own world, acting like a child.”

I looked out the window, watching buildings blur into a canvas of moving colors. What was so wrong about being this way? Why did everyone expect me to be in a rush, to be absorbed in a screen, to act as if silence was uncomfortable? Was it necessary to always appear busy, scrolling through an endless web of nothingness instead of simply looking around?

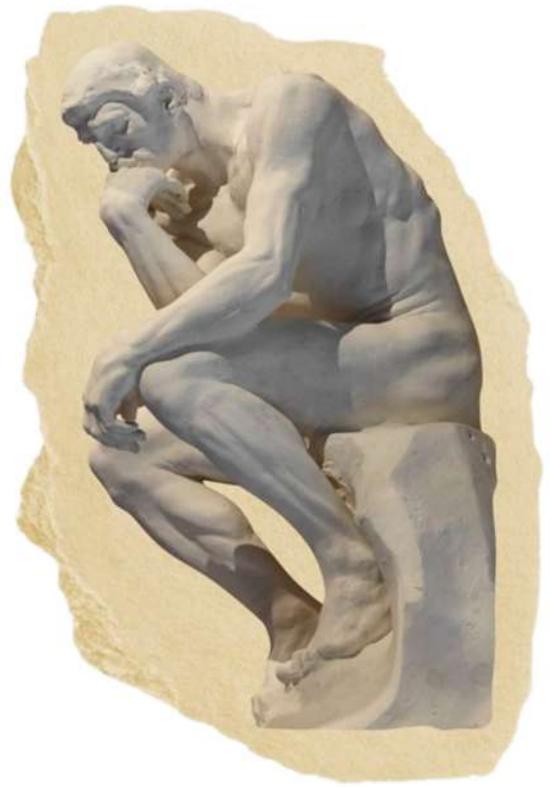
I had seen people in metros, faces lit by phone screens, eyes never lifting to adore the world around them. They thought reading a book was outdated, that sitting in quiet thought was strange. But why?

Maybe they were the ones missing something, not me. Maybe being carefree wasn’t a flaw —it was a choice. And if that made me childish, then perhaps I was imperfectly fine with it.

Written by: Sneha S S, Political Science, I Year
Edited by: Shweta Bhardwaj, B.A. Programme, II Year
Image Credits: Harshita Nareda, History, I Year



State and Art: Between Censorship and Support



The relationship between art and the state is a complex one, as it continuously oscillates between state-sponsored support and state-enforced censorship of art. Thus, making them appear often caught in a love-hate relationship with each other.

One of the earliest scholars to explore this connection was Plato. For him, art was a powerful tool to influence behavior in multiple ways. He strongly believed that it can help one become harmonious and also has power to corrupt minds.

Although Plato's ideas on censoring art are centuries old, the immense power of art to move and influence people still makes states wary of it, even in the modern era. Art imparts a timeless quality to any resistance it is connected with, ensuring that the struggle against the state endures in collective memory like whenever someone hears songs like "mera rangde basanti cholla", one gets transported to the times that these works symbolize.

The popularity in choosing art as a symbol of resistance lies in the resonating and emotional connect of the art pieces which has potential to take along people from different sections like Picasso's Guernica became a global symbol of anti-war sentiment during the Spanish Civil War for people belonging to multiple classes.

Art also gives a new energy to old issues by presenting them in unconventional ways, thus helping it garner greater attention in a globalised world. For example, Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke's performance of 'Mao-ri haka' in New Zealand's Parliament has again turned world's attention to the rights of indigenous tribes.

Modern governments also harbor a deep fear of art's potential to challenge authority, often manifesting this fear through censorship. However, it's often the case that the more a state attempts to suppress an artwork,

the greater the public's curiosity about it. State suppression generates an unwanted mysticism about the art work which makes people eager about it. As happened with the BBC documentary "India: The Modi Question" in 2023.

There's also another side to this dynamic. In many instances, the state has actively used art to promote its own propaganda. Since art is an emotionally resonant medium, it becomes a powerful tool for populist leaders to manipulate the masses. Propaganda art can take many forms, from grand architectural projects like construction of big monuments to politically charged films that reinforce the divisive ideologies of the government.

This highlights that modern state politics faces the same dilemma as Plato did—how to balance using art as a tool to strengthen state support while also preventing its use as a means of resistance against government actions. The key difference is that, while Plato resorted to censorship under the guise of protecting his ideal state, modern governments often justify similar actions by claiming they are safeguarding democracy. However, what continues to remain important is the value of art work in resonating with people's emotion and their use in bringing attention to the perspectives of different sections.

Written By: Shreya Bansal, Political Science, III Year

The Malefactor

Of all the maladies that plague the spectrum of political conversation, none is more exasperating—or, indeed more farcical—than the despicable, and frankly, insipid, attempt to criticise those who vow to be accountable. It is a true tragedy that the ingenuous honesty of people in power is constantly met with the impudent cynicism of those who elected them. As if the written word alone weren't sufficient to perpetuate histrionic criticisms of our authority figures, a select few thought it to be a good idea to entertain their puerile indulgences by distorting these few good men and women into grotesque parodies of their true selves.

Caricaturists, as the select few have been notoriously labeled, have long been widely reprobated figures. "Caricature had been considered a dangerous infraction against the canons of beauty...Diderot had spoken out against it, as had Goethe," stated Aimée Brown Price. Another distinguished art historian, Sir Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich, tells us that early in the last century, cartoons were merely endured as "the pardonable license of the low medium of illustration." In all honesty, this profession is quite baffling. It's one thing to lack the ability to draw, but to turn that very deficiency into a lifelong career—especially one predicated on the consistent failure to draw human beings—now that is a feat only the most ingenious swindlers could pull off.

In leniency, even if the cartoonists' lack of skill is pardoned, there is still one thing they cannot evade—the unforgiving fate of their creations. It is true that there exists a class of compositions which by their very nature, and despite any intrinsic good that they may possess, are foredoomed to controversy. And caricatures fall squarely into that category. The ability of cartoons—particularly caricatures—to make even the most stoic person feel something has always fascinated me.

For all their might, conquests, and royal decrees, history's great leaders have often crumbled in the face of unrefined doodling. Napoleon is reported to have said that the English caricaturist James Gillray "did more than all the armies of Europe to bring me down." King Louis-Philippe, on the other hand, was so rattled by a mere pear that he threw both Charles Philipon and Honoré Daumier behind bars. When pressed on why caricature, of all things, warranted such harsh punishment, he declared with royal indignation: "A pamphlet is no more than a violation of opinion; a caricature amounts to an act of violence."

One might think, however, that the passing centuries would be kinder to them, for after all, their only crime was being poor at drawing. But one would be wrong—dead wrong. Wrong, because not only were the subsequent centuries harsher, but they were also times so sensitive that the caricaturist faced complete erasure. Prominent newspapers, fearing a backlash, banned caricatures. Powerful individuals, no doubt afraid that their overly large noses might be made public, went to great lengths to hunt down these artists. Entire communities erupted in outrage at their portrayals. As I write this I'm starting to think it did not have much to do with their drawing skills. It was probably just their questionable sense of humour. Even so, isn't that still a stretch to warrant execution, imprisonment, or dismissal? What is it about caricatures that sends even the most "civilized" people into a frenzy? Is the caricaturist's task not akin to that of the classical artist? Annibale Carracci put it perfectly—one aims to capture perfect form, the other perfect deformity and both reveal the essence of a personality. "A good caricature, like every work of art, is more true to life than reality itself."

None of this matters now though, for the malefactor is gone—another casualty of an era that mistakes satire for sedition. You can't remember the last time a daily newspaper featured a caricature. But surely, the reader recalls countless stories of cartoonists who ended up in prison or lost their lives. How curious is it, then, that those who once condemned these artists often find themselves eulogizing them once they're gone? It's a peculiar truth that society honours what it kills and the malefactor may well find reverence only in death.



*Written By Nirvanika Singh, Journalism, II year
Artwork By: Adviteeya, Political Science, I Year*

The Quiet Resistance of Humour in ‘Derry Girls’

“It’s fair to say I have a somewhat complicated relationship with my home town.”

—Erin Quinn, “Episode 1”, Derry Girls

Few television shows manage to be as hilariously chaotic and deeply political as *Derry Girls*. Set in 1990s Northern Ireland against the backdrop of The Troubles, the series follows a group of teenage girls (and one English boy) navigating adolescence while living in a city marked by sectarian conflict.

While ostensibly a conventional sitcom with 20-minute episodes about a topic considered rather dark and bleak, *Derry Girls* instead uses humour as a form of resistance, positioning itself within a long tradition of Irish art that challenges oppression through satire and storytelling. In an interview with *The New Yorker*, creator and writer Lisa McGee stated how she found mainstream portrayals of The Troubles unrecognisable—“There were never any jokes. I don’t know any Northern Irish person that isn’t funny.” By centring teenage girls—a historically overlooked demographic—she highlights their voices, saying, “And I’ve always found women funnier, I think because that’s who I knew.” The show not only captures the resilience of ordinary people but also reminds us of how humour has historically acted as a tool of defiance.

One of *Derry Girls*’ strongest comedic devices is its juxtaposition of the political and the personal. The contrast reflects the peculiarity of life in a politically fraught environment—where teenage rebellion coexists with an active, violent one. The pilot episode captures this contrast perfectly: while a bomb scare locks down the city, Erin is preoccupied with her cousin reading her diary.

By viewing history through ordinary people, the show ensures individuals are seen as active participants rather than mere victims of history. The humour does not diminish The Troubles’ trauma but deepens understanding of those who endured it.



Much of the humour stems from poking fun at ingrained sectarian divides, like the school exercise that exposes petty stereotypes (Protestants store toasters, Catholics love statues). Both ridiculous and revealing, it highlights how division is often based on arbitrary distinctions. The show also embraces identity through language, proudly showcasing the Derry accent and slang as an assertion of cultural pride. Resistance to authority is another central theme, tinged with humour. Sister Michael, for example, embodies a disdain for religious and political institutions, rolling her eyes at their failures. Her attitude underscores how when institutions frequently let ordinary people down, they are forced to find their own ways to cope.

The final episode brings history to the forefront, culminating in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement referendum. After spending the series wrapped up in personal dramas, the teenagers face a pivotal moment in Ireland's transition to peace. By ending on this note, *Derry Girls* connects its humour to a larger theme of hope, reinforcing that laughter is both a survival mechanism and a force for change.

More than just a comedy, *Derry Girls* stands as a reminder that humour has always been central to resistance. By laughing at authority, mocking sectarianism, and finding joy in adversity, the show joins a long tradition of Irish storytelling that refuses to be silenced by conflict. McGee says, "...you can't separate the Northern Irish experience from the Troubles. You just have to put a spin on it. You can't sort of say it didn't happen. It's so deep within all of us." Its humour does not erase the past but reclaims it, proving that the ability to laugh is one of the greatest acts of defiance in the face of oppression.

Written by: Baibhabi Hazra, History, II Year

Redefining **Reproduction:**

The Handmaid's Guide to Modern Political Strategy

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* conceptualises a harrowing and horrific dystopian futuristic world where gender-based violence, ritualised sexual assault, enforced ignorance, and genital mutilation, along with institutionalised oppression and enforcement of patriarchy, is the established norm. The novel, published in 1985, on many levels, reflected the society to signify the underlying gender and class relationships in the world. It's not just a story about a dystopian future; it's also an abstract, symbolic way of discussing the present. The novel uses religion as a tool as well as a justification for oppression through the establishment of a totalitarian and theocratic regime, thereby raising issues related to reproductive rights and bodily autonomy, along with the use of Christian values and Bible verses to justify oppressive practices and inhumane brutality towards women. Women's bodies are controlled, objectified, commodified, and valued only for their reproductive abilities. The novel draws multiple parallels with the current situation of feminist struggles worldwide for reproductive rights and the overthrowing of norms that sustain and reinforce patriarchy, like the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in the United States. Gilead denies the handmaids any sense of individuality and humanity, forcing them to wear uniforms and winged hats – a cohort of breeding concubines and not separate, unique individuals worthy of respect and freedom.

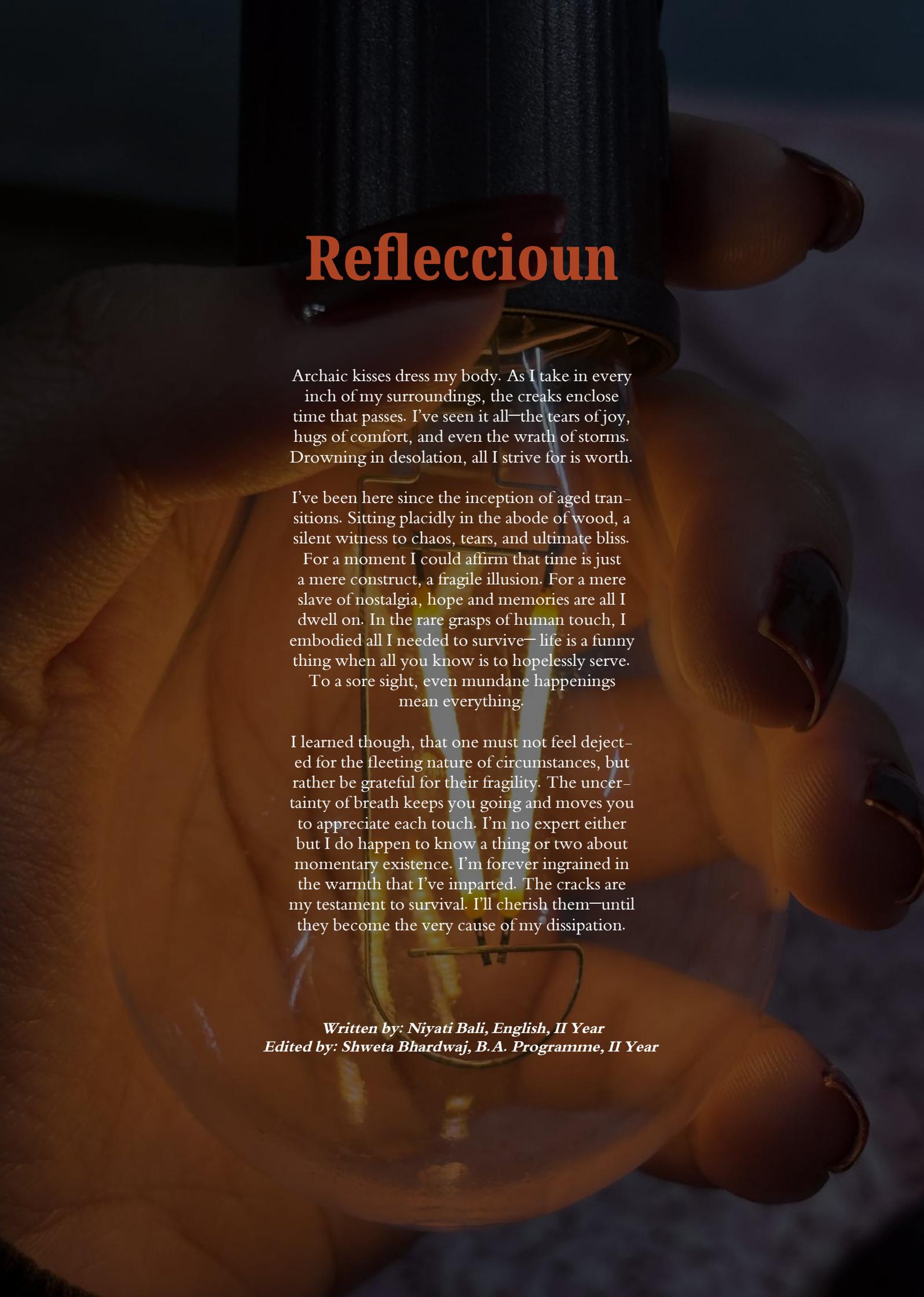
Although *The Handmaid's Tale* is set in the future, one of Atwood's self-imposed rules in writing was that she wouldn't use any event or practice that hadn't already happened in human history before. Every *torture*, every *situation*, and every *punishment* is something that is brought back from history into her story. The details of

Gilead, the new regime, slowly come into focus through the eyes of its characters. Atwood introduces us to her red-cloaked and stony-faced protagonist, *Offred*, a handmaid in the household of a commander. Before the coup that established Gilead, Offred had a husband, a child, a job, a normal life and a name. But when the fundamentalist regime comes into power, she is denied her identity and is reduced to being, in her words, “a two-legged womb.” She remembers the desires of her past and to stay sane, “Sanity is a valuable possession. I hoard it the way people once hoarded money. I will save it so I will have enough when the time comes.” This sanity is critical to her survival as are the tiny moments of her own life and resistance. The name “Offred” itself holds such significance, alerting us of her status as a *possession*; she is of Fred. The name also suggests that she is an *offering*; she has been *offered* to reproduce for the other classes of women that remain in Gilead. The “Wives” married to commanders, the “Econowives” married to lower ranking men, the “Marthas”, who are the servants in the commander’s houses and the “Aunts”, indoctrinate, instruct and police handmaids, exemplifying how power intersects with gender, perpetuated and internalised by women themselves, in turn enforcing their subjugation. Women, therefore, are not safe even with fellow females, some of whom have power intersecting with superficiality and jealousy leading to exploitation at the hands of those fellow supposed sisters. We never learn how Offred’s mother or Offred herself end, but we do know that she finds a way to tell her story and that her story survives. Aside from that, we can only *speculate*, as “The Handmaid’s Tale” is but *speculative fiction*.

Women do not have the right to knowledge, experience slavery practices, social discrimination, and acts of coercion according to the rules in force in The Republic of Gilead. This highlights the various forms of subduing women are subjected to. The wives, though higher up in the hierarchy, are not liberated. Despite being the lawfully wedded wives of the commanders, they are forced to witness them procreating with the handmaids. Their rigid roles lead to their inability to express themselves emotionally and their unmet needs and wants. The Marthas’ sole purpose to exist is to dutifully fulfil the household chores, thereby reinforcing and strengthening the gender norms. The Handmaids are the worst affected in this hierarchy, with their red robes and white bonnets solely defining them by their ability to procreate through a ritualised assault called “the ceremony”, thereby reducing them to mere vessels and concubines for reproduction. The ownership of their bodies is so deeply enforced that their original names are taken away, and replaced with names that come up by infusing the names of the commanders to whom they are assigned. The constant struggle between the handmaids and the wives insinuates the *Maddonna-Whore Complex* – The wives are portrayed as virtuous but sexless, reflected by the virgin-mary blue colour dresses they wear; the handmaids are sexy but sinful, symbolised by the scarlet red cloaks which reduce them to the status of sex objects. The separation of women into categories and simply reducing them to their functions doesn’t come across as an unfamiliar occurrence; women for centuries have been subdued and relegated into subdivisions to diminish and control their influence in the political, social, and economic spheres

The novel’s exploration of the consequences of complacency and how power can be wielded unfairly makes this chilling vision of a dystopian regime *ever-relevant*. In Atwood’s prophesied future, the actions of a small group have destroyed the society as we know it. This utopian or dystopian writing tends to parallel political trends. Utopian writing frequently depicts an idealized society that the author puts forth as a blueprint to strive toward. On the other hand, dystopian writings are not necessarily predictions of apocalyptic futures but *warnings* about how societies can set themselves on the path to destruction. This idea to make a fallen nation strong and great again is one that we all feel at times, and in “The Handmaid’s Tale” we are shown one vision of what can happen when the yearning for the future takes the form of *grasping for the past*. Part of the magic of this tale is how it feels so *real* and pertinent in today’s times. It serves as a reminder and cautions us that this is something that can *always* happen *here*.

**Written by: Ameena Ahmad B.A. Program, I Year
Kritika Kaur Sethi, B.A. Program Department, I Year
Priyamvada Sharma, Political Science Department, I Year**



Refleccioun

Archaic kisses dress my body. As I take in every inch of my surroundings, the creaks enclose time that passes. I've seen it all—the tears of joy, hugs of comfort, and even the wrath of storms. Drowning in desolation, all I strive for is worth.

I've been here since the inception of aged transitions. Sitting placidly in the abode of wood, a silent witness to chaos, tears, and ultimate bliss.

For a moment I could affirm that time is just a mere construct, a fragile illusion. For a mere slave of nostalgia, hope and memories are all I dwell on. In the rare grasps of human touch, I embodied all I needed to survive— life is a funny thing when all you know is to hopelessly serve.

To a sore sight, even mundane happenings mean everything.

I learned though, that one must not feel dejected for the fleeting nature of circumstances, but rather be grateful for their fragility. The uncertainty of breath keeps you going and moves you to appreciate each touch. I'm no expert either but I do happen to know a thing or two about momentary existence. I'm forever ingrained in the warmth that I've imparted. The cracks are my testament to survival. I'll cherish them—until they become the very cause of my dissipation.

Written by: Niyati Bali, English, II Year
Edited by: Shweta Bhardwaj, B.A. Programme, II Year

The Mirage of Choice in a Capitalist World

Last week at the mall, I faced a dilemma, both trivial and all-consuming. I had exactly 2000 rupees—the entirety of my monthly savings as a broke college girl. And there I was, eyeing a butter-yellow skirt at H&M. Butter yellow—Vogue’s forecasted shade for summer 2025, just as cherry red and plum ruled last fall. It was pastel perfection, hanging off a chrome rack like a promise. I circled it for an hour, hoping a new angle might simplify the decision. Logic preached restraint, but I caved, clutching the skirt as if it held more than fabric—validation, relevance, maybe even belonging.

It’s strange how little objects seem to hold our desires hostage, promising identity and worth. Yet, once owned, they dissolve into mere disposable and forgettable items.

I think of the countless micro-trends that storm our feeds: Vanilla girl, brat summer, clean-girl makeup, coquette aesthetics—trends spawned faster than we can save them on our Pinterest boards. In India, our archetypes blend cultural nostalgia with glossy consumerism. The ‘kurta-jhumka girl’ aesthetic, parading ethnic pride in Jaipur block-printed kurtas and chunky silver jewelry, the Stanley mug obsession disguised as practicality, iced matcha, Gen Z’s aesthetic beverage splashed across curated routines, or the pursuit of “glass skin,” immortalized by rice-infused Korean skincare and Hailey Bieber’s “glazed doughnut” glow—just more steps in the endless chase for perfection.

Even Pinterest, once a creative sanctuary for showcasing individuality, has morphed into a glossy sales pitch of mass-manufactured aesthetics. What was once a haven for documenting authentic creativity has now become a perfectly designed feed of ‘inspiration’—in reality, just another assembly line of aesthetics commodified and repackaged.

Capitalism dangles freedom before us like keys jingling before a child. We’re told we’re free to consume, curate identities, and reinvent ourselves with every purchase. But this freedom is a scavenger hunt for pre-determined, mass-produced prizes. The choices seem dazzling in variety, but they all trace back to the same corporate giants hiding behind different logos. Authenticity is supposedly about staking your claim

in a world of sameness. But under capitalism, aesthetic uniqueness isn’t a gift or rebellion—it’s a requirement for relevance. Just as companies push their latest ‘unique’ offerings, we’re nudged into performing distinctiveness online. We scramble to label ourselves, invent subcultures, and outdo each other creatively. Yet, despite all efforts to stand out, the results are painfully similar. From chasing niche micro-trends to embracing aesthetics only the chronically online would recognize, it’s all shaped from the same commercial clay—another chapter in an endless catalogue of consumable identities.

The cycle spins faster, always urging us toward the next big thing. From the butter yellow of this summer to the crimson shades of last fall, fashion’s clockwork is perpetually wound by commerce.

Maybe it’s not about renouncing trends or retreating from the glossy narratives spun around us. Maybe it’s about acknowledging the game for what it is—a glitzy dance where we willingly twirl, hoping the next purchase, the next label, will finally feel like something real. And as I hang the butter-yellow skirt carefully in my closet, I can’t help but wonder if this time, I’ve found something real—or just another thread in the endless fabric of illusion.

Written by: Sauradeepa Raha, Mathematics, II Year

The Little Things

Life has a way of sweeping us into its grand motions—the big dreams, the endless pursuits, the constant race against time. We spend so much of our lives chasing something—success, love, happiness—believing that these monumental moments will be the ones to define us. But in the end, life is not just the milestones we cross, nor the grand victories we celebrate. It is, and has always been, a myriad of moments—small, fleeting joys that we often overlook, yet somehow, they shape us in ways we never realize.

I have always believed that life is a series of contradictions. It waxes and wanes, ebbs and flows. Some days, the sun kisses our skin with warmth; other days, the clouds loom, heavy and unrelenting. And yet, through it all, the little things remain. They are the quiet constants in an ever-changing world—the ones that remind us we are alive.

Like eating chocolates, one after the other, not for satiating hunger, but devouring the taste of familiar comfort. A reminder of childhood innocence, of stolen treats before dinner, of laughter echoing in rooms now silent. Or reminiscing with my mother about my baby days, watching her eyes soften with nostalgia as she tells me stories I don't remember. Her voice, gentle and familiar, painting images of a time when my world was small and safe, when love meant warm arms that carried me through the night.

Then there are the ridiculous moments—the ones that seem trivial but stay with us forever. The cycle accident that left me and my best friend sprawled on the road, laughing until our stomachs hurt. The harmless, silly fights that ended in giggles. The times I walked straight into a wall, lost in my thoughts, only to laugh at my own clumsiness. The feeling of standing tall in front of the class, shoulders squared, voice steady, as I commanded attention. That tiny rush of authority, of importance—something so small, yet so unforgettable. The way childhood victories, no matter how insignificant, still glimmer in the corners of my memory, untouched by time.

In all, it's the simple pleasures—a double scoop of ice cream on a cold winter night, when the chill of the air only makes the sweetness more delicious. The little indulgences, the stolen moments of joy, the laughter that erupts without reason—these are the things that make



life feel full.

Perhaps, we often forget to cherish them because they don't scream for attention. They do not announce themselves with fireworks or grand gestures. But they exist, quietly shaping the days that turn into years. The very thread that weaves through the fabric of our lives, holding us together even when everything else feels like it's falling apart.

So, maybe life isn't just about the big achievements or the grand moments we build our lives around. Maybe it's about the small joys, the everyday magic, the fleeting seconds of happiness that, when strung together, create something beautiful.

Because in the end, it's the little things that matter.

Written by: Vaani Chaudhary, Political Science, I Year
Edited by: Ambika, Philosophy, II Year
Image Credits: Yashita Jain

Swimming Against the Current: Redefining Gender Bias

Renowned journalist Shankar Vedantam has presented an intriguing philosophy on gender bias where he likens it to ocean currents. When you are swimming in the direction of the current (when the bias is in your favour), you tend to believe that you are an excellent swimmer, but when you try to swim in the direction opposite to the current (when the bias is against you), you realise it is strength just staying in water without getting swept away. It is an unfortunate reality that women in our country are vainly swimming against this current, which is growing stronger by the day. One of the major aspects that form the basis of any discussion on gender bias is the question of sexual awareness among women in areas of body autonomy and reproductive rights.

The transition of women's reproductive rights can be viewed from a historical perspective. The foremost idea that lies at the core of the statement is the consideration of whether the woman has control over her body. When women from less privileged communities are married off at a very young age, they are made to believe that satisfying the sexual needs of their partner is their duty as a wife. This leads to a system which disregards the woman's choices and treats marital rape as normal and acceptable.

In our country, where even marriage is regarded as a woman's obligation, rather than a choice, the idea of motherhood is stereotyped as a phase which completes a woman's life. Going through the biological process of bearing a child and giving birth is not necessary to experience motherhood. Even a 12-year-old can have deep maternal instincts and experience what it feels like to be a mother. In this light, it is imperative that we redefine motherhood by detaching its linkage to the biological process or the gender, and consider the emotion, the feeling and the intent. You needn't even be a woman to become a mother. In a country where we recognize and respect other genders, we appreciate the emotions of motherhood that lie embedded within them and how they perceive and express it.

The key to better the current scenario is to increase awareness among the targeted communities. It is important to create safe and inclusive spaces where women can freely express any discomfort they might be facing in their personal and professional lives. It is also equally important to ensure that they feel at peace with their body, comfortable and familiar with their bodily needs and sensitive and alert about mental and physical changes.

The women of tomorrow should be better equipped to view societal institutions and practices from a refined and feminist perspective and be aware of their power over their bodies. Nevertheless, we are indubitably advancing to a better future, as is evident from recent initiatives aimed at creating more inclusive spaces, where women can open up about sexual harassment. The #MeToo movement and the recent Hema Committee Report are steps in the right direction. However, it is important to gear up to work towards achieving a better and more welcoming society which empowers women and celebrates their being, choices and dreams.

Written by: Shreya Anil, Economics, II Year



Orpheus At The Threshold:

The Lure Of Last Words

A humid gust of wind slashed against my cheek, thick with the scent of stale incense and burnt candles. The last words curled in the air like smoke refusing to settle. They had been spoken in the same breath as death, a desperate exhale, yet here they were; clutched tight by the living, dissected and deified. The weight of them pressed against my ribs, insidious, ghostly in persistence.

Even Orpheus had to turn back. Love, loss, finality, the temptation to seek one last glimpse is irresistible, even when the act itself ensures ruin. Perhaps this is why we linger over last words, treating them as echoes of something sacred.

We have always been obsessed with the final utterances of the dying. They are sacred. They are revelations. Or so we believe. The recorded last words of kings, criminals, poets, and philosophers are treated like relics, as though the flickering moment before death allows one final truth to slip through the cracks of existence. But is this reverence justified? Are last words truly a glimpse into the essence of a life, or are they merely the disjointed echoes of a mind unraveling?

History is saturated with final words, preserved, retold like scripture. Shakespeare understood their allure, his characters rarely died without uttering a phrase laced with consequence. “Look there, look there!” King Lear gasped in his final breath, perhaps seeing something unseen by the living. The trope of the confessional deathbed scene has seeped into literature, feeding our insatiable hunger for closure. Yet history is less forgiving, far less poetic.

Marie Antoinette’s supposed apology, “Pardon me, sir, I didn’t mean to do it”, as she brushed the foot of her executioner, paints her as refined, tragically dignified. But did she say it? Or was it stitched into the fabric of her legacy by those who wished to soften her demise? But history loves a tragic genius, loves to turn words

into epitaphs. Karl Marx dismissed the entire premise: “Last words are for fools who haven’t said enough.” Was this raw authenticity, or simply the luck of coherence in the final moment?

And what of the mind’s decay in death? The body collapses, the brain flickers, neurons misfire. The dying do not always leave behind coherent poetry, they mumble, they repeat, they slip into nonsense. The brain deprived of oxygen does not bow to our need for profundity. Some murmur prayers, some curse, some say nothing at all. Silence too has its weight. Emily Dickinson whispered of rising fog, but many others passed without a single utterance. Does that make their departure less meaningful?

A Period Or A Comma?

Different cultures cradle death differently. West has been enamored with final words as an encapsulation of existence. But in Zen Buddhist philosophy, a farewell doesn’t always require words. To them death is not an ending but a passage and spoken words are transient, incapable of capturing the infinite. To indigenous traditions, death is a return, a shift in being rather than a moment requiring declaration. The weight of the unspoken can carry as much, if not more, than the last breath of a dying man.

In Japan, the tradition of *jisei*, or “death poems,” traces a different contour; where the dying compose a final verse, deliberately crafted farewells. Thus, in loss cultures draw different maps. The West seeks a punctuation mark; the East finds a comma.

The Unspoken Goodbye.

Emily Dickinson’s final recorded words, “I must go in, the fog is rising”—carry the poetic weight of inevitability, a gentle transition from presence to absence. But what of those who leave without a whisper? Many phi-

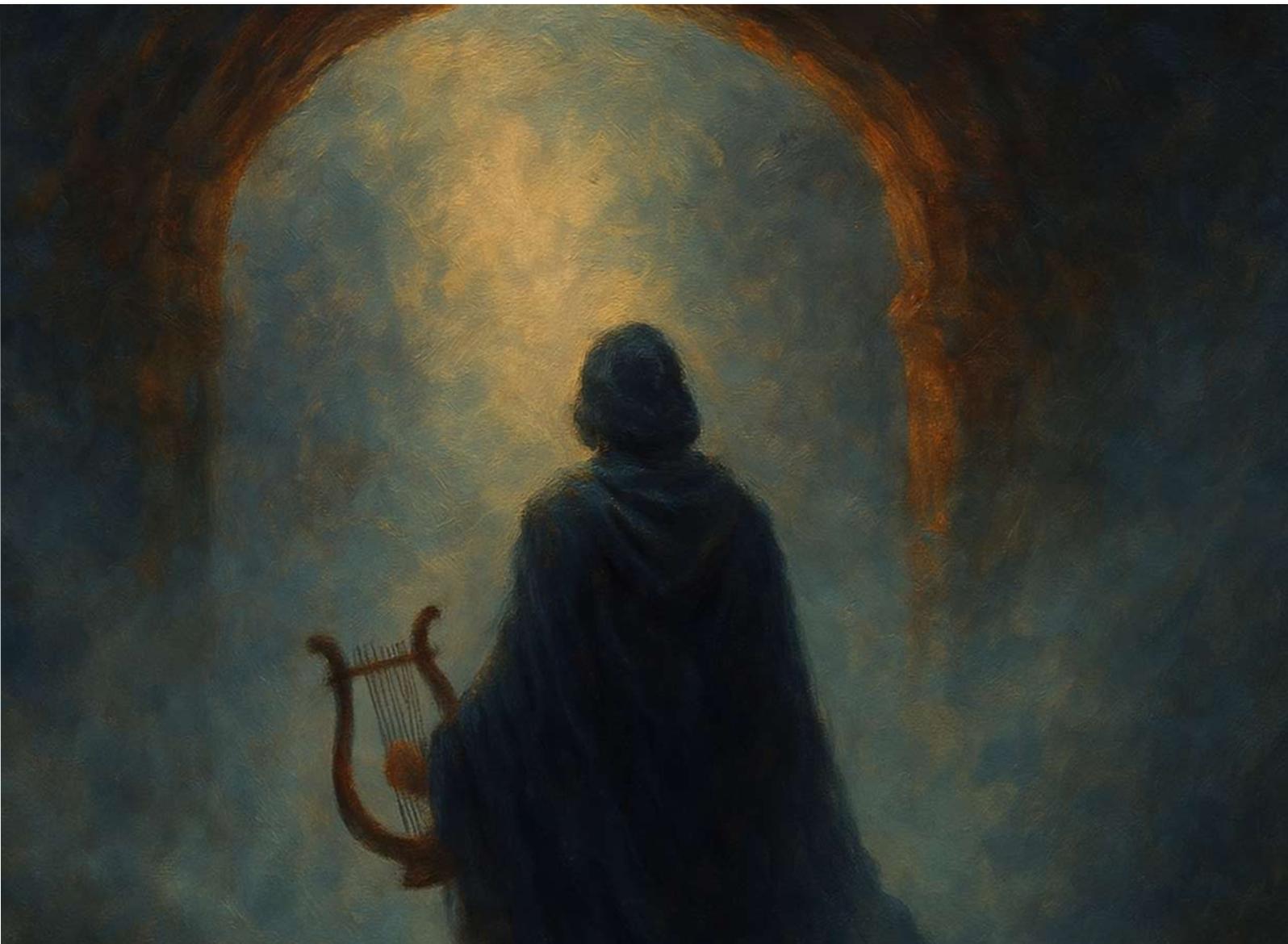
–losophers and artists left no final phrase, no audible trace of their last moment. Nietzsche spent his final years in silence. Virginia Woolf, in her carefully penned farewell letter, left no dramatic deathbed statement, only the steady current pulling her beneath the surface.

The absence of last words does not lessen a life. If anything, it resists the need for artificial finality. Seneca and Marcus Aurelius would argue that last words, when authentic, reveal not new insights but the culmination of a lifetime’s philosophical practice. Socrates’ puzzling final words, “we owe a cock to Asclepius”, reveal more than a simple statement. Was this religious, or a practical reminder about an unpaid debt, or a subtle philosophical joke suggesting that death is a cure for the disease of life? Regardless of interpretation, they demonstrate the Stoic ideal: facing dissolution with the same equanimity that governed his life. Some deaths are a murmur, some a monologue. The reality is that death is often quiet, unceremonious. Many slip away without a moment of clarity, without a final exhalation of wisdom.

The Weight Of Last Words: Do They Matter, Or Do We Simply Need Them To?

And so we return to the question: do last words matter, or do we simply need them to? Orpheus turned back because he had to know, just as we return, again and again, to the words of the dying, as if they will offer something final, something true. But the dead do not linger in their words; the living do. We scavenge meaning from breathless whispers, cradle them like relics, convince ourselves that in those final seconds, something essential is revealed. But perhaps the truth is simpler, last words are just that. Words. A fragment of noise, a gasp before silence. Because in the end, whether spoken or left unsaid, death does not explain itself. It simply arrives, unburdened, indifferent, and leaves us to decide what mattered at all.

Written By: Khushi Joshi, Psychology, II Year



Notes from the sorceress's curse

“I used to dream about the time when I had dignity in my life. I have been living in my house for so many years, and these villagers suddenly accuse me of being a witch. The entire village had a meeting where they brought in a bhagat to drive me out.” — Anaben Pawar, Testimony of Ana.

She was tied upside down, beaten with a heated rod, stripped naked, lynched, hacked, and sexually assaulted. When she defecated, only blood oozed out. The ritual lasted for four nights. Her voice quivers as she recounts the monstrous ordeal of 2017 — a vindictive indication of the extent to which witch hunts are rampant in India, both as superstition and as a tool of oppression against marginalized women.

Anaben's nightmare is not an isolated incident but a grim portrait of a society plagued by deep-rooted misogyny, patriarchy, and the caste system. The exploitation of women as “dakans” reveals how, despite 78 years of independence, the society hasn't become free from the shackles of superstition and oppression — and this practice runs rampant yet remains curiously invisible. The only time it gains visibility is when a woman dies due to this malpractice — death is the price for visibility. Until then, social patrollers make it a convenient explanation for everything — from infant mortality to diseases such as malaria and typhoid.

Accusations of sorcery are often used as a tactic to oust women from valuable land coveted by men. Calling someone a witch is seen as a way of settling scores among disgruntled family members or grabbing property from the vulnerable. According to the National Crime Bureau, the official toll of witchcraft-related murders grew to 2,500 between 2010 and 2021. The actual scale of casualties remains undocumented, far exceeding what is enumerated by official records.

A similar event shook the nation's conscience when Susilaben and her sister-in-law Madhuben, horrendously beaten during a witch hunt in 2014, recalled the trauma of seeing their plots of land overgrown with lentils and corn, turned into defecation grounds by the male relatives of their family. On parallel lines, the shocking ritualistic murders of two women in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district — revealing severe sexual abuse and mutilation of body parts before burial in a pit, demonstrate how this barbaric practice is an outcome of persistent self-interest, with communitarian concerns

used as a valid excuse to rationalize it.

According to a survey conducted by the Trust in Bihar in 2023–24, this practice continues even 25 years after the passage of the Prevention of Witch Practices Act, 1999, exposing the confluence of government apathy and caste dynamics, with an overwhelming 97 percent of the accused belonging to the lowest rungs of society. Over 73 percent of those ostracized had never attended school, and 66 percent lacked a source of income, leaving them vulnerable to mental harassment, verbal abuse, and routine sexual violence and killings.

The lack of institutional support is a significant reason for the perpetuation of this heinous crime. The enforcement of laws related to witchcraft is inconsistent, with the omission of the term from legal frameworks. Moreover, the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita doesn't have a uniform law dealing with occult-related practices, leading to its rapid proliferation.

The combined outcome of these factors has created a cataclysmic situation, further roiling this sinister practice. Community welfare initiatives such as ANANDI are a shot in the dark, given the dearth of structured mechanisms to root it out, despite their positive intent. To be called a witch isn't merely to lose your name; it is to have your identity erased, replaced by fear, blood, and silence.

As the embers of this ancient fire refuse to die, one is left to wonder: How many more Anabens must bleed before our society learns to evolve? Rather than burying the scars of this ancient practice in history textbooks, we need to unearth our conscience piece by piece until we no longer mistake a woman's strength for a curse.



Written By: Nausheen Khan, Journalism, II Year

Crying In College: A Comprehensive Guide

In LSR, if you take the lift in the Peace Centre building, get out on the first floor, take a left, and climb up the staircase (I know nobody ever does, but trust me) until you reach a dead end covered in shreds of cardboard—congratulations, you've found the perfect place to cry. Ask me how I know this? Let's just say I'm well-acquainted with the art of breaking down in inconvenient places.

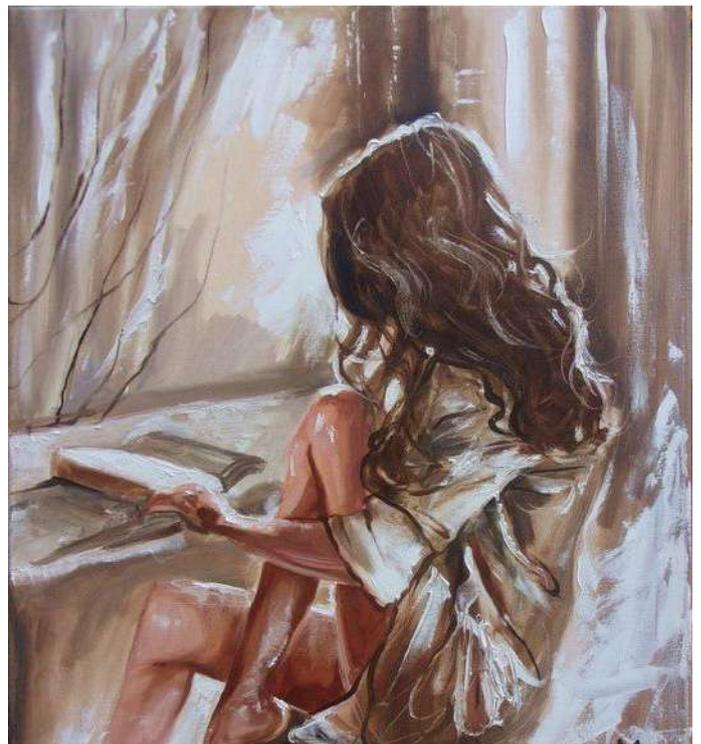
Just recently, I saw an article (read: reel) that said peak adulthood is trying not to cry on public transport. And I swear to God, I haven't found anything this relatable in a long time. But for me, it's not just about transport. Adulthood for me has been about trying not to cry at the most random times of the day. Sometimes, it happens on my way up an escalator, or while waiting for the microwave to beep. In a queue at the metro station. Under a cold shower. When my laptop takes ages to turn on. While quietly folding the week-old pile of clothes or when I'm walking the hallways of college. Sometimes, even in the middle of a class, when an unexpected melancholy settles in, pressing like a weight on my chest. My eyes tear up, my heartbeat grows abnormally loud, and I begin to blink excessively.

It's difficult to point out why I'm crying though; there could be a hundred reasons. It could be the fact that I miss my friends from school, that I don't know how to get myself a goddamn internship, that I don't have fashionable clothes to wear to college every day or, worst of all, that I still haven't gotten a reply from that one person. You know, the one. The one whose chat you keep opening obsessively to see if they're online. And then

you catch them online for a good five minutes and yet they disappear again without having replied. Oh Lord, the pain. That one calls for a good cry, preferably with Gracie Abrams playing in the background. But hey, let me clarify. Just in case you're thinking I'm God's weakest soldier who cries at every inconvenience: I am not, and I don't. I only cry when nothing is going right, life becomes too much to take, and I cannot possibly keep it together anymore. A breakdown, one might call it (not me though, I'm not that dramatic). That being said, I'm still a big fan of crying. 10/10, would recommend. If I got a penny every time I cried, got asked if I was okay, and blamed it on 'just some dust in my eye,' I could afford Nescafe's iced tea without thinking twice.

Now, I realise the title of this article was clickbait. This was neither comprehensive nor a guide. I just wanted to share my crying spot with everyone. Also, maybe we could put up a mirror there—at least we can pout and look cute before dragging ourselves to the next lecture.

Written By: Mansi Mahajan, Sociology, II Year



Manipur's Ima Market:

A Feminist Contemplation of Asia's Largest Women Market

The Khwairamband Keithel or the Ima Market of Manipur, located in Imphal, Manipur is renowned worldwide for its women-exclusive trade and commerce enterprise. The market is primarily dominated by married women known as “Ima”, meaning mothers. To the world and other parts of India, it might solely give the impression of a women-led business but it carries a profound historical and political history. The market is a testament to the intersectionality of politics, society, culture, identity, economics, and women's solidarity.

The market's inception began in the 16th century when men had to leave their homes to go fight in wars and women were left to tend to their households and eventually began to engage in trade, selling items such as vegetables, clothes, and crafts. The Ima Market facilitates a unique space for women's empowerment and subversion of societal norms. Here, the typical constraints of bio-politics, which often limit women's mobility and access to public spaces, are dismantled. Women vendors exclusively occupy the market; men are often driven away, marking it as a definitively female space. Through their participation, these women gain economic independence, challenging the societal norms that restrict many women across the country from engaging in public activity or business. The cultural legacy of the state is also upheld by the items they sell – ranging from traditional salt to handwoven clothes to household wares.

Despite facing competition from other businesses, Ima Market's women significantly contribute to Manipur's informal economy. Their participation is not just about conducting economic transactions; they also play a vital role in household sustenance, often replacing traditional gender roles. This dynamic enables them to challenge and subvert patriarchal structures in their society. The market serves as a focal point for political activism and social protest. It has been a crucial site for major historical events, including the Nupi Lan, or Women's War against British colonial rule in 1904 and 1939. In the post-colonial context, the market became a hub for mobilizations against contentious laws like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), as well as against state and central government policies. The women's market association actively addresses political and social issues, boldly calling out lawmakers and politicians, and initiating political dialogues with them. Ima Market is, therefore, more than an economic venue; it is a complex arena where the intersections of politics, culture, and society play out. It empowers women, fosters solidarity, and serves as a platform for political activism.

The market embodies the spirit of women in Manipur, showcasing their resilience and commitment to challenging patriarchy while advocating for their rights. Through its unique structure,

it creates an environment where women can thrive economically and politically, further blurring traditional gender roles and fostering a sense of community and resistance. In essence, the Ima Market stands as a testament to women's agency and empowerment, reflecting a rich tapestry of social, economic, and political interconnectedness that defines the lives of Manipuri women and their pivotal role in shaping the socio-political landscape of Manipur.



Written By: Moirangthem Bhagyashali, English, III Year
Edited By: Annesha Mistry, English, III Year

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall



Sight. See. Look. View. Gaze. I bet you couldn't write a single essay without using a sight-related word. What is it about our sight that holds such a central position in all our senses and identities? It is speculated that perhaps Frankenstein's monster would have never turned "monstrous" had he not glimpsed himself in a pool of water. Before seeing himself, the

monster was open to the possibility of belonging. He understands the inevitability of the atrocity and the loneliness that follows him only when he sees his reflection — his appearance. There is a moment of quiet horror, discontent, and a sleuthing realization that there's no turning back, and the helplessness builds into hardened resentment that hunts Victor Frankenstein, the maker, and several innocents in the process. Yet it is not only in literature that sight reveals the self. From the myth of Narcissus to Lacan's "mirror stage," the act of seeing — or of being seen — shapes identity. Narcissus falls in love with his own reflection, mistaking image for essence; Lacan argues that an infant's first recognition of its mirror image prefigures the formation of the ideal ego, a self that is forever split between the wholeness we perceive and the fragmentation we feel. In both cases, the mirror is more than glass and metal — it is a crucible in which subjectivity is forged. We come to know ourselves only when we confront our own image, and that knowing is inescapably tinted by desire, fear, and the longing for wholeness. René Descartes took this a step further by reminding us that our senses — even sight — can deceive us. If what we see can be doubted, what of our very existence? It is here that Descartes discovers his foundational truth: "Dubito, ergo cogito, ergo sum." ("I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am"). Even if all sensory data were untrustworthy, the act of doubting confirms the existence of a thinking self. Sight, then, is both gateway and gauntlet: it delivers the world to us, yet it can be the first to lead us astray — forcing us back upon the only indubitable evidence of being, the cogito. Knowing is bound up with existence. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote that "hell is other people," but elsewhere he insists that "to be is to be perceived." For Sartre, consciousness is always consciousness of something, and that something includes the gaze. If no one ever looked at me, would I fully be? This dilemma lies in the heart of the philosophical assumptions pertaining to what the nature of reality is — does the laburnum tree still bloom when we're not looking at it? Existence thus has a social dimension — our being is affirmed or denied through the eyes of others. When Frankenstein's creature first glimpses his reflection, he does not merely see a face; he sees the world's verdict on his right to belong. For in sight lies not only the knowledge of who we are but also the promise of who we might yet become.

Written By: Aishi Mitra, English, III Year

To Be a Student Is to Hope

My time at this institution has been nothing less than transformative. I spent most of my time looking through the college magazine archive, and it was like watching the college evolve over the decades, and reflecting on the lives of the people who made it what it is today. It's a pleasure: seeing yourself as a part of something so much bigger than yourself, of viewing yourself as part of a glorious legacy, such as this institution's.

But each time I walk these halls and go through the college magazine archive, I am reminded of both the responsibility and privilege I carry. To be a student, especially in a liberal arts women's college within a public university, is no ordinary position. It is one of access; hard-won by those before us and one that demands we do something meaningful with it.

Women have fought to enter institutions like this one. They fought for the right to speak, to think, and to be taken seriously. In 1956, when this college began its journey, it did so with a vision that women's education could be rigorous, expansive and liberating. Our being here is a testament to those struggles and also a reminder that the work is ongoing.

In recent years, education has been increasingly repackaged as an individual endeavour: neatly measured, tested and ranked. Standardised exams like CUET reinforce the idea that knowledge is something to be consumed and certified, rather than questioned or shared. But anyone who's ever sat in a good classroom knows that learning doesn't happen in isolation. It happens in moments of discomfort and revelation, with peers and professors, mostly in tute rooms, after extended discussions. Learning requires community, and it takes time.

As bell hooks wrote, "The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy." I have felt that possibility. In tute sessions that stretch into the evening, in group projects that turn into shared friendships, in collective readings that make the most difficult texts come alive. The joy of working together, of resisting the competitive instinct we're taught to internalise, is a joy I didn't expect but one, I now treasure deeply and chase after. Paulo Freire states in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other." At its best, this college reminds me that learning is not just the absorption of content; it is the cultivation of attention, of patience, of community. It is an ethic of care, of approaching texts and people with curiosity rather than judgement; of choosing collaboration over competition, and of learning to sit with discomfort and complexity, rather than simply privileging certainty.

Public universities, by their very nature, hold radical potential. They are built on the belief that education is not a commodity but a common good. That knowledge should not be hoarded but shared. That learning can, and should, be a way of participating in the world more justly. This is not a new idea to us at LSR. It's exemplified in our college motto: "Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye" – that alone is knowledge which leads to liberation. But this vision is not inevitable. It is, in fact, under constant threat: from policies that seek to commodify and hollow out education, from the casual dismissal of the humanities as impractical, from the repression of dissent, and from the growing tendency to frame critical thinking itself as dangerous.

The role of the student, then, becomes even more urgent. And I've come to believe it is not only about critique. It is also about care. About learning to listen. About holding space for uncertainty. About refusing the flattening of our experiences and insisting that there is value – political, intellectual, and emotional – in the messiness of thought.

One day, we will all leave this institution. Its laal deewarein will become part of our memory. But the work of the student should not end at graduation. If we have learnt well, we will carry the 'magic' so many of us speak of, forward into our professions, our communities and our work. It will become the lens through which we navigate the world. We will continue to ask better questions and to insist on better answers. We will remember that to study is not just to prepare for the future but to practise, in the present, the work of imagining something better and striving towards it.

To study is to believe that the world could be otherwise. And in that quiet, radical hope, there is power. Our ability to hold on to hope is our power.

Written By: Vaidehi Krishnan, Philosophy, III Year



Putting Our Heads Together, Linda Carmel

Instructions; Illegible

That parallel lines never meet has to be up there in the list of the greatest tragedies of all time.

Growing up has meant a constant difference in opinion with past versions of myself. The world won't stop but it feels like it will. The grief of never meeting who I was up until yesterday hits like a truck on a random Thursday, and I reel back, gasping from the impact.

By now, I have spent countless hours mulling over the temporariness of it all. Adulthood would never gate-crash a party; it comes in discreetly and hides in nooks and corners till denial decides to leave.

Growing up also means that the world seems a little less coloured, and a little more fragmented. The sky isn't one solid light blue anymore; there are stretches of purple and orange and grey in between. It is there every time I speak up for myself or go fill out official forms alone.

"Things are different now, the internet has changed everything," my friends and I tell each other, vigorously nodding our heads in agreement every time we disagree with what someone older has said. Maybe social media has warped my perception of reality. I am not naive enough to challenge each generation's indisputable belief of its own superiority. But growing older with the internet- but it not shaping my entire childhood- has played an instrumental role in the added layer of nostalgia that coats every childhood trinket. There is comfort in how the same games, the same shows and the same Sunday evenings have brought so many of us up. The similarities, if we ever sit down to discuss them, are uncanny. But the familiarity is also what draws us together. And so many years down the line, when we go over those tangible pieces from our childhood again, paying ode to inanimate objects is a surreal experience.

Maybe the Great Instruction Handbook- scribbled over and scratched out a million times, by countless hands intentionally comprises of handwriting that I can't quite call legible. How else do you explain the disillusionment that comes with not fully having figured it out when everybody else seems to?

And when all of us feel this way, this is how we cope: in the crooks and crevices of our hearts, we slowly start making space for the people who are there. Their love isn't loud, but it's there in the way a parent makes sure you eat on time or how a friend cheers you up with-

out you having to ask. The small joys anchor me. With them comes a realisation that spending time with my favourite people has a direct correlation with piecing the ground back together under my feet.

I now make my notes in the instruction handbook. Not in very legible handwriting, either. I doodle illustrations in the margins, so that even if the handbook is slow to update with time, at least it will help someone else see the humour in it all.

Written By: Vidushi Mohan, Economics, III Year



The Quirky Politics of Male Validation

“You were a beautiful baby when you were born”, My mother tells me skimming through old pictures of my childhood. I am wrapped in a blanket so delicate I look like I could break if someone touched me. Despite the varying circumstances of the pictures, I was always smiling. It didn’t matter if my dad was hanging me down from a leg or I was standing next to our German shepherd. I seemed to be abreast with any situation. This quality, my father tells me, is passed onto me from my great grandfather. A thing of pride. I am habitual of showcasing this out of the blue confidence from time to time. I can recall it clearly too; in the holidays, competing with my uncles or grandfather to be present or intentful while I’m speaking. I was going to give up on this tireless pursuit of demanding respect, thinking it should’ve been something just standard. Though, one day, I hit the bell. It was golden. I’m in. A worthy contender for the elderly talk. Not even a minute passed when my uncle tugged at me from behind and said, “Now don’t get in your head about this.” I wondered if this is what sitting at the elderly table was like. Men overriding conversations, wanting to be at the top, while there is no space for an outsider. In this case, for a girl like me.

My sister laughs at a picture of me from primary school. “You look like Neville Longbottom. Like he was eating humans for food.” My cheeks are puffed with rose pink lips, my haircut – that of a boy. Despite the grave embarrassment of the first day at school, I savvied through this change by embracing it to be my very own. I had been afraid to cut my hair because of the ‘ugly’ tag which the other girls with similar hair length had been ascribed with. Our hair length might match that of boys from the school next building but it never matched their coolness. A constant source of ongoing hearsay, these boys cooked up words every other day. And we on the other end of the spectrum, would begin using them religiously with such a natural ease that it never occurred to us how influenced we were by them. Hanging out with boys gave my seniors a legitimacy they had always craved. To us, it only created a standard to follow: you had to be in the boys club to be influential. One step closer to being in this cool group, I dared to approach them during recess to ask a silly question. A boy, who I had been noticing for a few days while he slightly returned my

gaze back, told me the way and also asked me to get his bag from his class which was on my route. Later on he would accuse me of eating his lunch in its entirety. What propelled the accusation, according to him, was that I was so weird for having such short hair as compared to others, that I was perfectly capable of doing something so indifferent; so un-girl-like. As it would come, in the same manner as the day before, I approached the group and gave a hard long stare to the girls. I told myself I’d never be anything like those girls. I took the guy’s lunch box kept beside them and ate a big chunk of his sandwich. Everyone stood still and saw me eat with my whole hand swallowing down bites without really chewing. If I could, I would be chewing on a human, I thought. Just not as much human as I would think. My father points out looking at a picture, “You were so plump and chubby. What happened? You look like you stopped eating at all.” I could never tell my father that I had spent the entire night crying in the washroom the night before. High school can be a cruel place, who would tell him? Prospect academics packed in shiny technology gear and the overwhelming attention of boys mixed with an appalling disapproval of girls. The pale colour of my skin: a plus point. The bulky body hair I inherited from my father: not acceptable. They say you can be whoever you want to be once you grow up. I wish to grow outside my body. I turn twenty in anticipation of this growth. Fresh off the high horse in a girls college I told myself, this is all going to change. A week in college. Everyone’s so nice. It’s all so prim and proper I don’t know if I belong. A month has passed, missing the chaos. Who do I impress? I don’t have anything to show.

I’m not enough, not enough, have never been enough, not.

A year down in this city,

Does knowing what to wake up for count as improvement? I hope so.

Written By: Ambika Khachi, Philosophy, II Year

Death of a Fangirl

Growing up in a fandom is not a difficult feat, just memorise their birthdays, middle names and hometowns. You should know what Harry Styles wore to the 2014 Brits awards and what Louis Tomlinson named his pet pigeon in 2010. You just need to share the same jokes, language, and narratives, know the lay of the land and build yourself around belonging. You find a community, pick your username, select your role. You choose your character like in a video game: you could be either @mrs-niall-horan-until-the-end with purple hair and a fiery gauntlet, or @keepingupwith1d with a shiny silver sword. Soon people will know you, you will either be the one who makes the deepest lyric analysis, the one who writes the best fanfiction, the one who updates their every move, or the one people come to for theories.

“As a South Asian kid, being introduced to “English music” can become a personality defining moment. It can do everything for you, and that’s what One Direction was for me.”

— @that01d

It becomes your everything, or maybe you become it. For the first time ever, you feel comfortable, you make sense here, you don’t have to question your identity, you’re talking to so many people and that’s everything. It really is.

“Thinking about how I used to sing the lyrics “I just wanna tell the world that you’re mine girl” a little too passionately. I had always thought that there was something wrong with me, but being there, (at a Louis concert) with so many other queers, I felt safe. I was home.”

— @onlythebrave4louis

But what happens when an all encompassing love, passion, and dedication, so intense that it consumed your every waking hour, just fades away? What do you do when the hysteria is gone and in its place is just a One Direction t-shirt that doesn’t fit you anymore?

Sometimes death is violent and ugly, like a carcass under a train. It hits you all of a sudden: you’ve forgotten their mothers’ names. When there’s no new videos to air, no interviews to watch or jokes to share, media scholar, Rebecca Williams labels it a “zombie” fandom. You try to cling to it, because what else is there to do?

“I was introduced to them in 2015 when Zayn had just left the band and was a fan mostly after they disbanded. So I’ve understood the boy band craze in retrospect, once they were already out of their prime. I’ve understood it in vestiges and remains: videos, documentaries, pieces and pictures.”

— @that01d

“It’s just growing pains, I think. But when I realised I hadn’t watched, say, their interviews, in a long time I felt weirdly guilty. Like maybe I wasn’t myself anymore”

— @whatmakesyoubeautiful

For some, it is slow and peaceful, it dies in its sleep. It comes with a knowingness and acknowledgement of a rite of passage. Despite your earlier protests, you find out that it was, indeed, a phase.

“I was a fan of One Direction while they were in their prime and even afterwards, I was holding onto them until one day, I was not. The gradual detachment wasn’t intentional, I just no longer know what they’re up to, what they’re doing.”

— @mullingar

Even when it’s been years since you even thought about them, they’re everywhere. You haven’t changed your house keychain, you can’t delete your Tumblr account, you still know their birthdays. When you were a part of

something, something that at once gave you meaning and purpose and identity, you can check out any time, but you can never leave.

“I may not know what they’re up to but I know what my friends from that time are up to and what they’re doing, and I think that’s the major takeaway. They gave us a sense of community, as a gift, that we still have that we can always return to. We shared them as an inside joke, as one collaborative developmental experience. I no longer think of those people, but it’s comforting to think that I can if I wanted to”

– @mullingar

Williams points out how death serves as an indicator of life. As you age, and enter new stages of the life course you will use your fandom to bridge your growth. You know you will always find comfort in it, you will play their songs even as you write this essay about why you don’t play their songs anymore.



Written By: Jiya Jawa , Philosophy, II Year

To The Town That **Abandoned Me**

They say, “Your home is just a town you’re a guest
in.”

My home–
The quilt that engulfs me
Protects me from waves of sadness
Yet it is never mine to choose

Every corner preaches my name
So does the stall under the pink shed
But all I do is quiver– the haunted town’s echo has
that effect

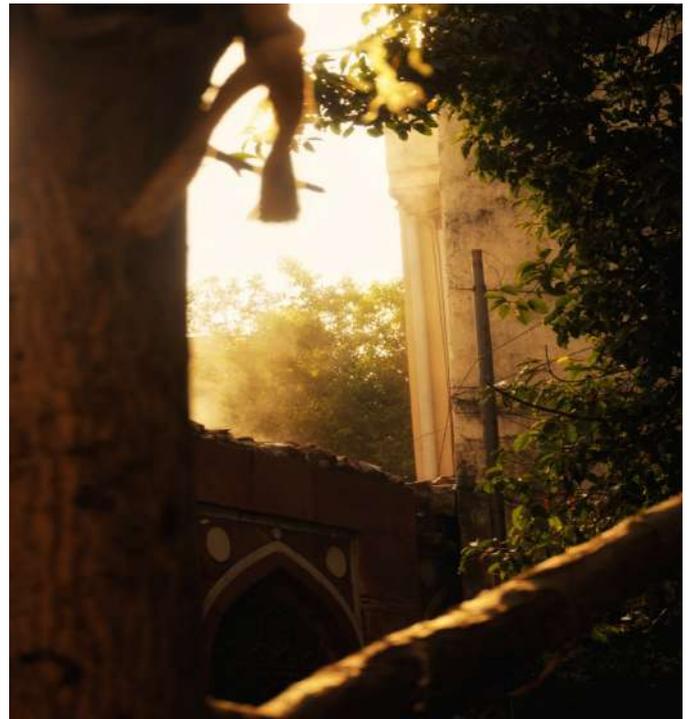
I run and run until my lungs fill with nostalgia
Until the smell of spices from my mother’s clothes
embrace me

I run only to find the doors of my abode shattered

Maybe home isn’t where I grew up
Maybe it’s where I outgrew myself
So I grab my bag and throw the weights away

I get on the road to find a home
A home that’s truly mine
With no ghost in sight
All because my home was just a town
A town full of niceties
A quilt that engulfed me
And waves that tried to murder me

*Written By: Nityati Bali, English, II Year
Edited By: Nityaa Aryal, Economics, III Year*



Whilst The World Sleeps

Past the midnight, whilst the world sleeps,
she is wide awake, her gaze persistent at the unfathomable
skies above, and reimagining and contemplating the
mysteries it beholds,
beyond what is visible to the eyes.

The frail, gleaming city lights, from afar
and the meekly visible little shadows of the souls,
never did she ever realise, when the hum of the city faded
to a distant lullaby.

It's been years now since she felt and dared to be something
beyond,
the mother, the daughter, the sister and the wife she is
now,
and years down the line,
she does still feel the quiet stirrings of a self, long buried
beneath the roles she wears.

Still afresh is the yearning, to run away, into those narrowly
undefined alleys, where she once spent the evenings pedalling,
or assimilating into hundreds of others, in those weekly
market crowds.
The cliché "home sweet home" she now finds abhorrent,
for she won't be anyone's but her own, as always.

And as she stands there, beneath the vast, unyielding
sky,
she feels it—the quiet hum of a thousand other hearts,
beating in unison, across cities, across time.
Women who have whispered the same questions, who
have felt the same ache, who have buried their dreams
beneath the weight of the duty.

Determined and headstrong as she had always been,
realisation to untie from all that contained her,
and so she rises, her gaze now shifting from the sky
again towards the city lights, no longer is there the
incapacitated desire to escape,
she rather has now set foot to reclaim what had always
been hers: the voice, the dreams, the right to exist
outside the margins of worldly expectations.

She is no longer a role to be played, no longer a shadow
to be cast,
she'll be the keeper of her own reincarnated fire,
the architect of her own sky,
and with each step now, she sheds the weight of
'should',
and with it,
the inception of a silent revolution,
whilst the world sleeps!

Written By: Sara Thind, Political Science, III Year
Edited By: Dorothy Bhuyan, English, II Year



Wish You Were Here

“Ma, you promise to walk again by the time I come back for my summer holidays, right? That’s two months from now.”

“Yes, Laadi, I sure will,” she groaned as my dad laid her back on the bed.

It was noon. She was all dolled up for the day. My parents had bathed her, cleaned her bed sores, and carefully bandaged them. Then it was my turn—to comb her hair and press an orange tika on her forehead, one I had specially brought for her from the temple.

She had fallen in January, her feet caught in the folds of her own saree. That fall had rendered her legs ineffective, at least for the time being. But we all believed—hoped—that with her medications and daily walking exercises, she would recover. Being the youngest of her grandchildren, I had spent the most time with her, at least until school ended. We shared a room; she would watch me study through the night, often reminding me, “Chhori, don’t forget your milk. It’s already 2 AM; it must be cold as water by now.” Then I left for Delhi. Ofcourse, she was not selfish enough to hold me back and keep me close to her bosom. I sometimes wish she was.

On March 30, 2024, my mid-sem break ended. It was time to leave for Delhi. I hurriedly bade her farewell. She cupped my chin, ran her hand over my hair, her eyes brimming with tears. I couldn’t look at her for too

long—I would’ve cried, and I couldn’t do that. Looking away, I kissed her goodbye and sat in the car. As we drove off, intrusive thoughts flooded my mind. What if this is the last time? What if she isn’t here when I come back?

But we always think, No, it cannot happen to us. We live with the illusion that loss is distant, unreal—until it happens.

She wasn’t doing well. My family called, asking me to come home. Maybe she was holding on, waiting. Because the moment I boarded my flight, she let go. She left, knowing her Laadi was on her way.

It didn’t hit me then as it does now. Every moment, big or small, reminds me of her. She left, but the regret remains. What if I had stayed two minutes longer? What if I had hugged her one last time? Because from that day on, I wasn’t bidding farewell to a person—I was bidding farewell to a photo frame.

Home doesn’t feel like home without her. Birthdays have lost their joy without her childlike excitement. Even the smallest achievements feel unworthy of celebration. I had always feared losing her, and now that childhood fear had become real.

I’ve always been scared of death, but that day, as I held her cold yet familiar hands and kissed her forehead for the last time, I realized—I never will be again. Some losses change you forever. I know I will never be the same.



Written By: Riya Mohata, English, II Year
Edited By: Dorothy Bhuyan, English, II Year

Of Love, Longing, and Loss

Dear Bombay,

As I share my tryst with you, I am standing at a cross-roads. I do not know whether to tread the road less travelled by following my heart or traverse the grassy road by doing what my brain commands.

I first visited you when I was a condescending 18-year-old who had just joined LSR but was patronisingly opinionated and ambitious. I was an impulsive force and felt like no power could stop me. I would make haste and replenish my unrequited love for people who would not trade back anything with me.

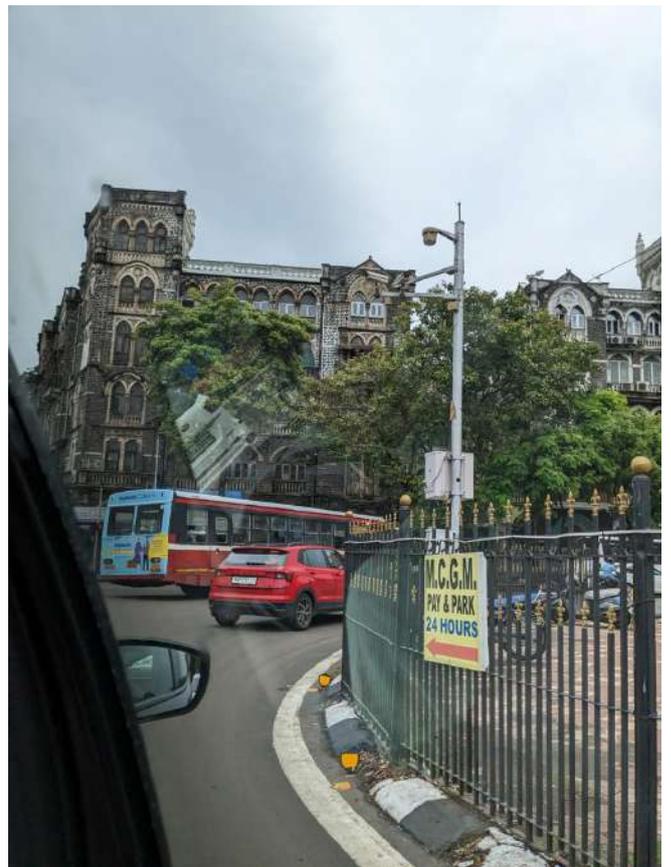
In the last 18 months, I have met some wonderful people who helped me unlearn that there is harm in embracing femininity. But something was lacking. Someone extraordinary, someone who would sweep me off my feet and make me a believer in the Almighty. I was content with the routine of life, yet I knew I yearned for more. But, my heart was too scared to admit this; logic took control of the steering wheel of my life, sending my emotions to the backseat.

Life had alternate plans. I saw them for the first time on a sunny day in July, and man, oh, man, did they create magic in my life. My heart somersaulted in my chest. When I talked to them, everything felt within reach. It gave me chills, I was scared, but knew that everything was possible with my human form of sunshine by my side. Then the unexpected happened—my grandfather passed away in August 2024. It felt like God was waiting for one particular moment to destroy everything in my life, that I had built brick by brick. I thought I knew grief because he was my old pal. I met him in April 2015 when my grandmother died. But little did I know, this time it would be raw, consuming and came with fierce waves of melancholy. You cannot deal with it in a snap of a finger. It has been six months and I still experience a void in my heart. It hurts to even look at the photos of my grandfather on my iPhone and listen to his voice.

Now, I am turning 21 in a month and about to start my fourth year of college. I visited you again and nothing had changed. I can still sit at Marine Drive at 2 a.m., pondering about the uncertainties of existence. The pizza at Pizza By The Bay tastes the same and life feels beautiful again when I sit on a speed boat in the Arabi-

an Sea. Bombay is brutal. It knows my past, my present, and possibly, my future — all welded together till my flight lands at the Delhi airport. And this is what we all need — something familiar amidst the changing winds of life.

I think about my love, longing and loss while listening to the famous Rafi song “Yeh hai Bombay meri jaan” and envision a future where they will be mine, and I will be theirs.



Written By: Ishpreet Kakkar, Political Science, III Year
Edited By: Yashodhara Ranjan, Political Science, III Year

Beyond words: Capturing the Magic of LSR

With no set theme for the magazine this year, I found myself with the perfect opportunity to weave a narrative of my own. One phrase in particular caught my eye—"a tribute to the electric spirit of LSR."

For nearly 70 years, LSR has been weaving its magic, shaping and refining one woman at a time. Before joining, I must have spoken to a hundred people, asking what gives this institution its undeniable charm and legacy. The responses varied wildly—some spoke of its academic brilliance while some simply smiled and said, "You'll know when you get there."

The journey began when my dad and I anxiously checked the admission results reading: "Shortlisted for Philosophy (Batch of '22)." My dad, usually composed, held his head in his hands, his face a mix of awe and pride. His exact words? "Waah! Kya faadha hai beta!" But what exactly makes LSR "magical"? The short answer—you don't explain it, you live it.

Could it be the towering red walls or the comforting aroma of Nescafé's coffee? Perhaps it's the excitement of wearing our mom's old sarees at Tarang, or the effortless grace of Elsas in chikankari kurtis and jhumkas? Maybe it lies in the mentorship of our seniors who have given us reality checks at times. Or maybe it's the professors who guide us through puzzling times (like placements?!), or in existential crises triggered by one too many philosophy readings.

One of my most cherished experiences here was re-

connecting with music. Becoming the General Secretary of SAAZ – The Instrumental Society of LSR was an honor, but the real magic lay in the moments in between—like the time we performed for underprivileged children at our annual fest. A friend later sent me a video of a little girl saying, "Woh green baal wali didi itna sundar guitar baja rahi thi." That, to me, was LSR's magic—being part of something larger than yourself, where your art and your presence make an impact.

And then, there are conversations with peers—the kind that stay with you long after they've ended. A spectrum of opinions—some you fiercely agree with, some you passionately debate against. But amidst all this, you learn the most valuable skill of all: the confidence to form your own.

LSR's magic lies in its fierce feminine energy. Here inspiration isn't something you seek—it's all around you. I've witnessed the "magic of LSR" firsthand—girls who are not only captains of the football team but also rocking a 9.0 CGPA without breaking a sweat. Whether photography, dance, or debating, success here isn't about doing everything—it's about dedicating yourself fully to what you love. That, to me, is the electrifying spirit of LSR. My dad always says, "Talent, focus, and hard work—balance those, and you're set for life." Being here made me realize just how true that is. So, to the juniors reading this—just hang tight and let the magic of LSR do its thing.

Written By: Khyati Bindal, Philosophy, III Year
Edited By: Nityaa Aryal, Economics, III Year
Image Credits: Ishita Das, Journalism, II Year



Beyond Goodbyes

In life, we occasionally cross paths with people who instantly feel like home when we meet. It's a short meeting, a fleeting season – yet they gain a place in our hearts and become a huge part of our lives as though they have been a part of us all along. The warmth of these connections is so comforting that time flies by. Without realising it, the tide of time gently pulls us apart.

Initially, we promised not to let go of each other. We even make sincere efforts to stay in touch, with late-night texts, laughter-filled video calls, and hours spent talking to each other. We revisit the promise to meet again. But life, ruthless and unconcerned, intervenes. Time marches on, turning days into weeks and weeks into months. The messages fade, calls grow scarce and moments laced with the joy of laughter start screaming silence.

Yet despite the unjust choreography of existence, something stays. The imprints people leave on us refuse to fade. That radiant ease we felt around them that allowed us to exist unapologetically free, the feeling of blooming in their presence – being seen, heard, and cherished is carved beautifully in our souls. We often tell ourselves that moving on is inevitable and we must journey on without a pause.

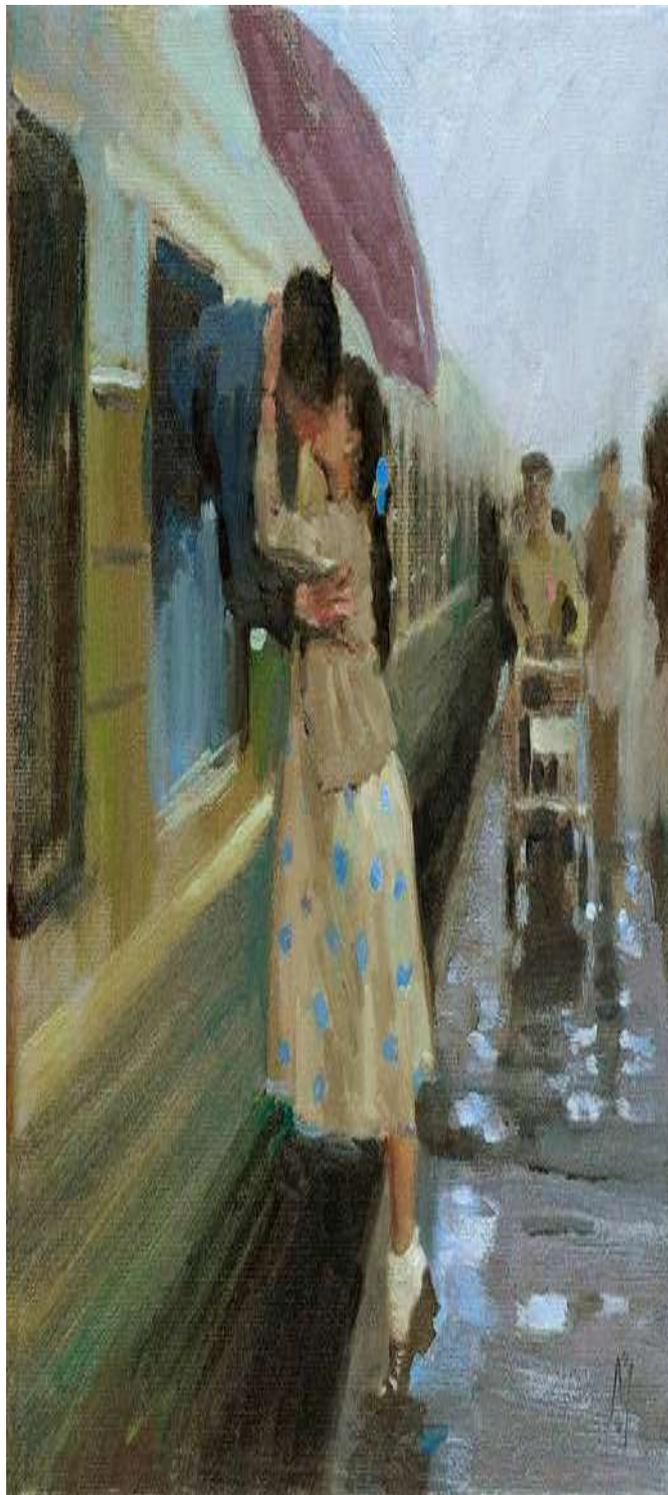
But do we have to “move on” from everything that made us feel alive, the beautiful things we felt, and the people who nudged us to become better selves? Can't we just keep these memories alive in our hearts forever and carry their fragrance through the seasons?

In this world which has romanticized moving on, I say the power lies in holding on. It's in those ties that we find the strength to evolve, not just for ourselves but for those who we refuse to let go of.

I refuse to move on. Instead, I choose to look back and cherish the love I received, the lessons I gained, and the person they inspired me to be. As it is said “Into each life some rain must fall” but on these rainy days, I will have the secret garden of those memories to fall back on and get a warm hug from. They have woven themselves into the chapters of my life, becoming a part of my story and stories are never erased– they are retold, reimagined, and remembered. Just like the elusive tengu bird in Japanese folklore that guides travellers in the dark, some bonds always stay, unseen but felt, gently shaping us into our better selves.

If fate brings us together again, I will embrace it. If not, I will hold them close, always within my heart knowing that some bonds, no matter how brief, are for life. And

those who say that moving on is inevitable must know it is a mere illusion; for the ones we love never truly leave us. They just change the way they stay.



Written By: Nancy, Economics, II Year
Edited By: Sauradeepa, Mathematics, II Year

In the Garb of Apolitical

“If nothing else, Elsas are an opinionated bunch. And we stand by what we think.”

–Reshmi Rai Dasgupta, former editor of The Economic Times, alumna

“I’ve been disappointed to see how the college has become so apolitical and how we are no longer a space that feels safe enough to be political”

–Dr. Shernaz Cama, retired professor of the English department

Any major historical movement embarked under the aegis of equality and freedom has been rooted in dissent. It is in the endeavour of questioning the existing societal structures of power that we have progressed. It would be thus not wrong to say that a marker of a good society is one of active participation. In this context, it includes not only protests and revolts, but dialogue, discussion and an overall engagement of people with issues that affect them.

If we were to apply this model then to our own lives, the best case study would be of our college.

Imagine this: 243 women, sitting in some small classrooms in a part of Daryaganj, 1956. These women would go on to be a living proof of the wonder education can create if given to all. To then step into this historical place, after many sleepless nights and months of uncertainty of entrance exams, to feel its green serenity, to just listen to the lived lives reverberating through its red walls, was nothing short of a miracle.

Soon however, this peace felt almost disquieting, and the apolitical nature of the college was something every senior would quote whenever we asked why we don’t have the famous speakers other colleges have, why there was no hubbub of elections like in the north campus, why the fests don’t have famous celebrities, why we don’t have funds to even make our padding machines work. For a college best known for producing strong-headed and opinionated women, this apparent nature felt like a cruel irony. To look for answers, we turned to the only picture of student politics we could conjure, the general body meetings.

In these meetings, we noticed abysmally low attendees. This is despite the regular holdings of these GBMs where the union members are always present. The concerns raised are almost always the same: girls feeling unsafe on their way back home, lack of student emails, washroom cleaning and problems with the canteen. The most depressing of these issues is of course the issue of safety of students. Even though PCR vans are stationed around campus, incidents of flashing and catcalling continue in broad daylight. It is depressing to see the bold women of this college huddle in groups as soon as they cross the Laxman rekha of the campus. It is repulsive that somehow, we aren’t even able to install CCTV cameras at the front and back gates despite pressure from students. Pepper spray keychains dangle from our bags, messages are sent and anger is expressed, and another semester goes on. It is disgusting to contemplate what we are waiting for.

In one such GBM, I saw a student genuinely interested in what was happening on campus and asking questions. We decided to interview her. Mannat is a third year sociology student who is active in various societies. She feels that LSR is actually not apolitical, and the politics does happen, but in a subtle way. “Our college has only the image of being apolitical.” She substantiates this by giving an example of how during Lok Sabha elections, posters of the Prime Minister could be found everywhere on campus. The posters of Viksit Bharat were put up in places. Anurag Thakur, former minister of Sports was invited but it faced opposition after people found that he was openly islamophobic. A GBM was set up and the sports union was questioned about it. She further adds, “Saying that you don’t have a political stance is also a political stance. There are very few people who look beyond the facade of being apolitical. For me personally, when they (college) say they are apolitical, they actively try to dissociate themselves from taking accountability.” Going by the examples, the college seems to take sides with the ruling party, but claim they are apolitical. This observation is not misguided. Indeed, the term ‘apolitical’ is a nice way to excuse yourself out of any tricky situation. It is a wonderful garb under which one can get their own way and play innocent.

Specifically regarding student politics, she feels the number of students who are politically aware have declined significantly. She gives the example of a protest that happened in 2020 by LSR students demanding an institutional probe into Aishwarya, a student's suicide following financial constraints, a review of the hostel policy and an increase in wages of canteen staff. This is in contrast with the indifference to campus politics nowadays. "A sense of responsibility is not there anymore. Politics is treated as gossip. It has a value of entertainment rather than action," she adds.

This is something we have felt in our batch as well. We rarely talk of campus politics and when we do, we just express bewilderment at the lack of it. We are leaning into the jadedness of "this is just how things are". It is disturbing to see this trend. Conversely, the fact that almost whoever we talked to about this article was excited to know more was enough to keep us optimistic. One issue that always cropped up was DUSU. While Mannat says it is time to break our isolation, since if not being affiliated to DUSU was doing us any good, top colleges like Hindu and Miranda wouldn't have affiliated in the first place; others disagree.

Afsa Khan, president of the Journalism department and an avid reporter for the DU Beat magazine is all too familiar with the "hooliganism" that comes along with elections. There have been a number of disturbing incidents in the name of politics that have occurred in north campus including but not limited to harassment, forced entry, bribery, mismanagement of resources and a general trend of using muscle and money power to persuade the voters. This critique leads to a broader question,

Can affiliation to DUSU be the only solution to our isolation? Concerns regarding the corrupt, unsafe practices of DUSU is something even those who wished college to be affiliated to DUSU raised. Many students come here precisely to avoid the disturbances of DUSU in their studies.

The absolutely crucial thing to do is to break our comfort zones. It is upon us as students to hold accountability. The harsh truth is we will have to go out of our way to do this. Ask important questions, push for inter-college collaborations, focus not on "what is easier to get permissions for" but push for genuinely interesting ideas. If not in a university space, then where?

As Afsa recounted in our talk, students of our college are far from passive spectators. One notable incident was when Prof. Nivedita Menon, an alumna and retired professor of the college was denied entry because of her political inclination. Students skipped classes and other responsibilities to organize an informal session in the park behind the gates, demonstrating their respect for her. It would be futile to say that people have stopped caring at all. Rather, it feels as if there is a clash between the individual and the institution. Identity is a complex thing, collective identity more so. So is there even a way to reconcile the difference between them?

We may look at other colleges here for inspiration, Hindu College has their own student parliament. At the end of the day, the only way of bringing change is by doing politics. To reform politics, there can only be more politics. To resist it, is to resist change. The mindset of "minding my own business" needs to go, because campus politics is "my business".

We'll leave you to make up your minds with a final question. In an attempt to save ourselves from dirty politics, are we denying all of politics?

Written By
Anushka Jain, Political Science, I Year
Yashika Jain, English, I Year

Hangin' Between Subversion And Commercialisation: *How Hip-hop Got Consumed By The Culture Industry*

In the August of 1973, Jamaican-American deejay (DJ) Clive Campbell—professionally known as DJ Kool Herc—then 18 years old, and his sister Cindy organised block parties for the teenagers in their neighbourhood in South Bronx, New York. Herc would play music on a sound system he created himself. The Bronx clubs were struggling with gang wars and the prominent local DJs were serving the disco crowd. Therefore, the Bronx teens flocked to the Herc and Cindy parties. He pioneered the technique of extending the breakbeat of a song on the record, developing what he called a Merry-go-round music. Hip-hop was born.

Music has always acted as an arena of resistance, of subverting existing hegemonies in an artform that reaches the masses. It has witnessed several cultural movements which have attempted to challenge dominant narratives and have created alternative spaces of expression. The emergence of hip-hop culture in the aftermath of the civil rights movement, and an emerging neo-liberal economy in the 1970s was the most visible assertion of Black identity in a largely White dominated rock music industry. Hip Hop culture mainly comprises four elements—MCing or rapping, deejaying, b-boying and graffiti.

The message of hip-hop was clear. It was a gritty, unapologetic exploration and questioning of the condition of African-Americans in New York City and the USA. They highlighted the discrimination and social evils and critiqued public institutions for ignoring the Blacks. They were carving their own space, battling their erasure and relegation to the margins. Hip-hop was their rebellion. They demanded people to recognise their existence. “For the Culture: Hip-Hop and the Fight for Social Justice” argues that hip-hop is not just a culture, but a lens to view the world. It is an ontology, with its own epistemology. It created spaces—material, musical and emotional—for Black artists to challenge dominant narratives about race, freedom and equality. As praxis, it created communities of political engagement and was a very crucial element of Black Resistance Movements like the Black Panthers and Black Lives Matter.

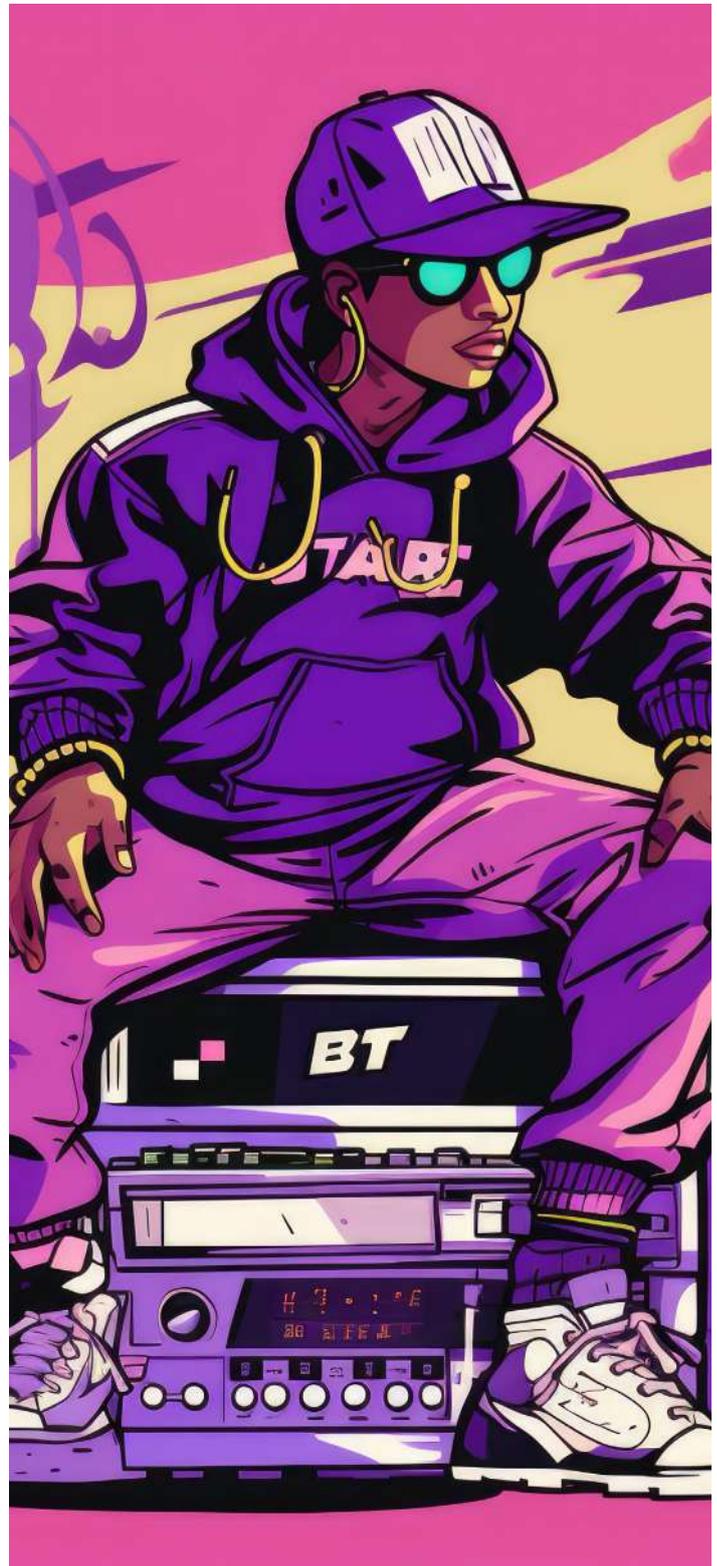
With the neo-liberal age, the racially disproportionate distribution of economic benefits and its ramifications on the living conditions of the black population in the US formed a major subject of rap music of the time. On the contrary, the same era saw the rise of hip-hop as a popular music genre. The mid 80s to 90s was the golden age of hip-hop, marked by the emergence of a plethora of sub-genres and mainstreaming of rappers. The gangsta rap subgenre was a paradox. It was explicit, about both poverty and misogyny. The subversive lyrics were still present but the mainstreaming made the culture violent. The rappers highlighted the deplorable living conditions, police brutality and substance abuse in their neighbourhoods, while asking their community to keep dreaming big and living flamboyantly (“Juicy” by The Notorious B.I.G., “Sound of da Police” by KRS-One, “Fight the Power” by Public Enemy). This genre created the two of the most popular rappers of the 1990s, Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. whose infamous rivalry and gang war ended tragically with their murders within six months of each other.

The contemporary mainstream hip-hop music is sexually explicit and homophobic, quite different from the counterculture roots it sprouted from. Once a movement becomes mainstreamed and institutionalised, it loses its radical, subversive counter-culture elements. The space that they created for themselves remains marginalised, while the artists move to acquire the dominant ones they once critiqued and rebelled against. This is not limited to hip-hop, but to any institution or movement which started with a radical potential, and got absorbed by the

dominant neo-liberal forces that shaped their popularity and mainstreaming.

South Asia has now witnessed a proliferation of underground, indie rap artists who highlight the issues of their communities, and create songs with political messaging. Several regional rap artists in India fit into this category. Arivu (Arivarasu Kalainesan) is an Indian rapper and songwriter whose music carries an Ambedkarite message and Tamil identity assertion. He is distinguished for blending Oppari, a traditional Tamil form of lament singing, with Western rap genre. He was a member of the Casteless Collective, creating songs like the “Jaibhim Anthem”, “Sanda Seivom” and his debut album “Therukural”. With the release of Gully Boy in 2019, Mumbai rapper DIVINE (Vivian Wilson Fernandes) became popular for creating songs for the film, which was partly based on him. His earliest songs are known for being a raw depiction of life in the city of Mumbai. MC Kash (Roushan Illahi) is a rapper based in Jammu and Kashmir. He shot to fame in 2010 with his song “I Protest (Remembrance)”, which he released in the aftermath of the 2010 clashes in Kashmir. His songs are seen as a symbol of dissent for the youth in Kashmir, which often express angst and protest against authority.

Therefore, at its birthplace, hip-hop has largely deviated from its counter-culture roots. A major reason for this development can be analysed through the concept of culture industry. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, eminent critical theorists, have argued that popular culture and mass society standardises cultural goods. In this process, popular culture creates passivity and artificial psychological needs (inhibiting true psychological needs like freedom and creativity), compelling people to consume a standardised mass-produced culture. The story of hip-hop can be studied through this theory. The mainstreaming and commercialisation from the late 1980s erased the subversive space it had emerged with, inhibiting its radical messaging. Popular rap music is now marked by abusive lyrics, which often target gender and sexual minorities, and blatant use of violence, lyrical and physical. But, a parallel movement is emerging in small pockets in other countries, inspiring regional rap artists who are keeping the radical potential of hip-hop culture alive while subverting the hegemonies they grapple with.



Written By: Yashodhara Ranjan, Political Science, III Year

I Think I am a Human Tang-hulu



The basket was filled with strawberries and grapes, basking in sunshine falling through the window. I walked up and would relish the fruits of my father's garden that he toiled so hard for. I never understood my father's love for gardening, but I did grow up to appreciate it a lot. On Sundays, when he was free, he'd till the soil and buy new seeds and place them in little pots—he'd ask me to paint the pots with my cheap acrylic paints and hardened brushes. Well, I wasn't the best at taking care of my things, unlike my father. But I'd do so happily. Every summer, I'd wait eagerly for the strawberries to grow, hoping to taste the juiciest berries straight from my father's garden that he loved so dearly.

I didn't understand the idea of passion or individuality back then, yes, I didn't. But the one thing I didn't understand mote, was the criticism that passion or individuality was often laced with. My mother's family didn't quite appreciate my dad's preoccupation with growing strawberries and nurturing his plants like little humans—they found it "effeminate." Indeed, I didn't understand the meaning or weight of such words back then, but I'd see them laugh at his hobby during family dinners, and the next moment they'd be feasting on his produce. And my father? He'd smile happily, like he had achieved what he wanted to—despite the mockery that came with it, he seemed unfazed.

Eventually, I grew up. Strawberries lost their flavor for me. I went out, I explored the world, and discovered this new trendy thing—Tang-hulu. It was basically the fruits I grew up with, but coated with a thin layer of sugar. I found it redundant at first. I mean, fruits are already sweet, why do we need a layer of sugar with them? But it's true. It was delicious—sweeter, more palatable, less bland and watery.

I'm away from home now, and my father has long been gone, but the taste of his strawberries bring back memories I thought I had forgotten, caught in the fast-paced landscape of my everyday life. Somehow, no strawberries out

there taste the same as the ones he grew. None of them are laced with such love, and none in the market will ever serve as a scrumptious symbol of resistance against the normative flavors of identity. I think the years have watered me down, and society has coated me in this layer of sugar to become more palatable. To be marketed away. *I think I've become a human Tang-hulu.* A fruit coated in sugar.

Dear father, I feel frustrated, completely lost. I didn't see it sooner, that I had sold away a piece of myself chasing this cycle of life, which doesn't even feel like my own. You told me how, when I was four, I wouldn't leave the seashore till I caught all the clams and brought them home. I remember standing up against my best friend's bully in high school. I came home bruised, but you forgave me. Told me I did the right thing, although Mother wouldn't stop yelling at me. You made me a fruit salad, and everything felt okay. Everything was okay. In college, I loved a guy. He turned out to be abusive, called me names, and deemed me a slut—I fought back and got his ass handed to him by the police. I chose my dignity over my love, although everyone around me told me not to fight back. I did. But what has gone wrong? Like the world is playing the trumpets of victory, another one coated in sugar to taste her misery. The sweetness is to fit their palates, but for me, my flavors are gone—my freshness dried down and juiced out, and my identity trapped in a sugar case.

*Oftentimes, I cannot seem to figure it out. Who am I, really?
I am afraid to speak out,
Afraid to go out in public wearing a dress that doesn't go below my knees.
I'm afraid to sing and live loud—what if they hear me?
I'm afraid to walk the streets alone; I dread being touched and seen wrongly.*

Dear father, I see it now. You never let the world cage you in its “sweet” calls. You did your thing, even against the flow of strong currents and heavy waters, for you were the strawberry—and you relished in that. You didn't let the world make you palatable to their tastes, according to their whims and fancies, you didn't become a human tang-hulu. And I can only wish that I saw it earlier.

*The world has become a place
Where I'm constantly fighting to survive,
Fit into a box I cannot even call mine.
I wonder, I'm sugar-coated now to fit everyone's taste—
Whose flavor profile, whose palate do I grace?
Dear father, I feel lost sometimes, I certainly do.
But I think I didn't realize
When did I become a human Tang-hulu?*

Written By: Dorothy Bhuyan, English, II Year

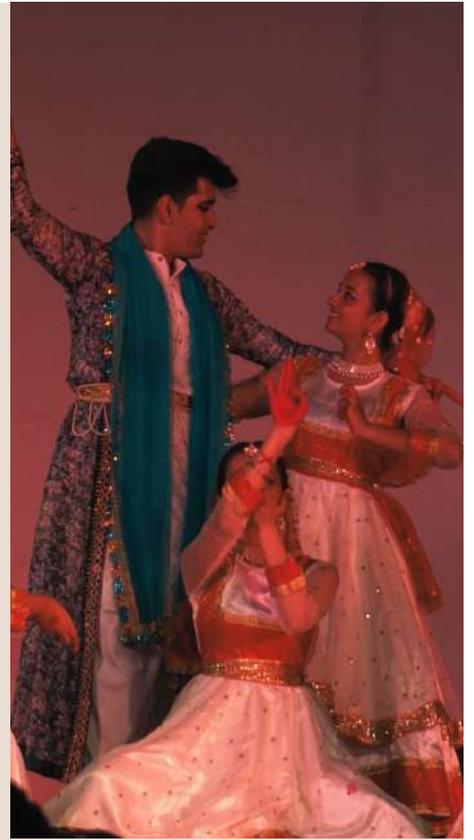


Image Credits: Ishita Das, Journalism, II Year

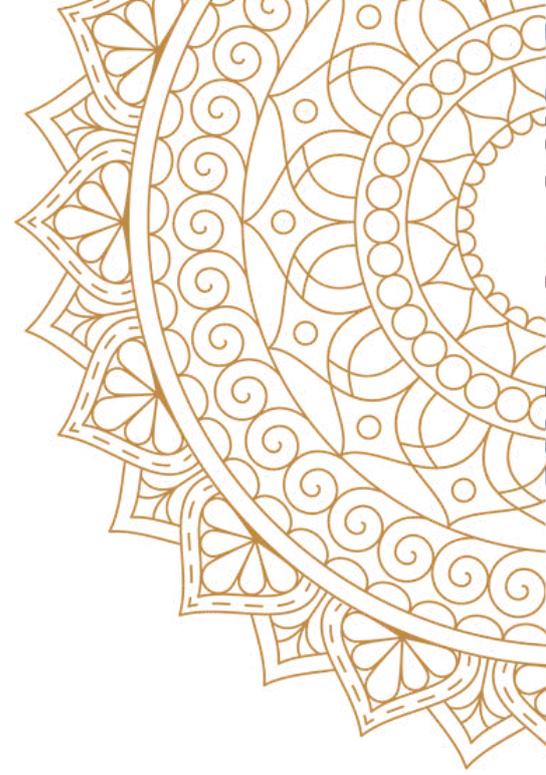
सुखी, सुखी



Artwork By: Asmi Chawla, Economics, II Year







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Bahubhashi' 24

A WOMAN'S BODY
is not YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY

~~PROTECT YOUR DAUGHTERS~~
EDUCATE YOUR SONS

IF YOU ARE
EDUCATING YOUR SON
BUT NOT
MAKING SURE YOUR
SON KNOWS ABOUT
RISK

WOMEN DON'T
CAUSE RAPE
RAPISTS
DO



MYSTIC MAJHEM



SOCIETY REPORTS

Abhivyakti

This year was filled with creativity and excitement for Abhivyakti, the Hindi creative writing society. It began with an orientation session for first-year students, followed by the “Shabdon Ka Caravan” competition. We hosted documentary screenings and discussions such as “B se Bemisal” and “B se Betiyan” and collaborated with NCC for a street play on women’s rights. A major milestone was publishing our online magazine, renamed from “Vihaan” to “Abhyantar”, officially launched during our annual festival, “Bhavakriti”. As a pre-Bhavakriti event, “Mrs.: Prerana Ya Pashchat” sparked discussions on the film Mrs. The year concluded with the grand success of Bhavakriti.



Dance Society

The Dance Society has had the pleasure of organising and participating in numerous events this tenure. Beginning with auditions and a Freshers’, the three wings of the society—Classical, Choreography and Western—went on to perform on Teacher’s Day, organise a pre-Tarang flash mob, and host four events during Tarang: Mudra, Battleground, Izraaz and Baila.

Our classical wing also performed at TedX and several college events, including the Commerce Department’s Alumni Meet, opening ceremonies of Pre-Tarang events, and the Principal’s Farewell. This tenure has been full of rich experiences and performances for the society.

English Debating Society

This year has been nothing short of exhilarating for the English Debating Society of LSR! We successfully hosted the Intra-College Conventional Debate Competition, bringing together passionate voices from across the campus. Looking ahead, we are set to welcome debaters from different colleges for our flagship event, LSR PD, from April 17–19. Our contingent has also made its mark in several inter-college tournaments, breaking and excelling. Throughout the year, we also conducted reading circles, interactive sessions, and discussions, enriching our members’ analytical and rhetorical skills. As we conclude this tenure, we take pride in upholding the spirit of debate at LSR.



Dhyāna

Dhyāna: The Society for Consciousness and Awareness fosters self-discovery and mindfulness through reflective discussions, creative workshops, and engaging conversations. On October 17, Dr. Megha Dhillon explored body positivity and self-care. On November 14, Dr. Sentisungla Longchar discussed self-reflection and personal growth. On November 25, Dr. Priti Dhawan conducted a session on exam stress management. A key event, Coffee with Faculty, featured Dr. Anjana Singh discussing self-growth and overthinking. Through its various events, the society has embraced the concept of the role and prominence of consciousness in all aspects of life.



LSR Dramatics Society

This year has been an enriching journey for the LSR Dramatics society. We produced and performed several plays, with 4 annual productions in different areas of theatre- stage, street, mime and film- each bringing a unique story to life. The society collaborated with NSS for 'Kala,' performing Dhappa on gender roles in children, and staged Aakhir Mujrim Kaun? on Teachers' Day.

We also hosted intensive workshops on music in theatre and staging one person plays with our alums- Anika Shastri and Durga. Stepping into another year, we remain committed to pushing creative boundaries, amplifying unheard voices and using theatre as a medium for dialogue and change.



Projekt

Projekt thrived as a creative hub at LSR. We began with screenings of "The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse" with the BAP department and "Taak" with director's assistant Nimisha Shrivastava. Our Pridewalk photowalk, Teachers' Day film, and a World Photography Day competition enriched our journey. We produced NOOR, a Diwali Mela film, and revived our YouTube channel with the Hometown Cha Cha film series. Our Dirty Laundry exhibition showcased zines, a concept film, the nation's dirty laundry, hanging scripts, and comfort photography in a tent. Under Tarang '25, we hosted many competitions. We covered Manu Bhaker and the Her Haq Summit. Monthly Projekt Wednesday meetings and work on the Red Room magazine sustain our creative vision. As we reflect on these accomplishments, Projekt continues to be a driving force in artistic innovation and community building, both within the campus and beyond.



Entrepreneurship Cell

E-Cell kicked off the year with an orientation for 150+ students, fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial culture. Project Markethic provided marketing services, conducted SOC training, and built a 200-startup database while onboarding Sushi Baka and Feeding India. The Operations & Research team hosted a brown bag session on frugal innovation and published industry insights. Marketing & PR amplified E-Cell's presence and launched Voices of Influence with Suchali Jain. Project Crescent tackled malnutrition in Bundelkhand, while Project Kaushal collaborated with Capital City Music Institute. The year concluded with Comquest, featuring competitions and the Founders' Forum, connecting students with visionary entrepreneurs.



Elocution Society



The Elocution Society launched its online newsletter titled Sonder and published three successful editions, exploring the themes of resistance, longing, and desire. The society hosted an interactive session in collaboration with NSS during Kala, in addition to crafting several engaging moving boards on campus. Reading circles discussing queer authors and student resistance were also conducted, along with a panel discussion dissecting tales of resilience. Furthermore, the society organized an inter-college slam poetry event titled (Un)-Censored. It successfully staged its annual production, Tying The K(not), and hosted Ishq-E-Bagawat, a slam poetry competition, during Tarang.

Enactus

Enactus LSR started the year 2024 by celebrating twelve years of creating positive social and environmental impact through its projects – Saarthi, Musavvir, and Vi-char. This year, we touched 500+ lives, employed 15+ economically disadvantaged individuals, and empowered 200+ women.

Our presence at DLF malls and corporate partnerships with organizations like FTI, along with winning 7+ competitions organized by institutions like IITD and DSE, highlights our continuous growth. At the Enactus National Exposition, we ranked among the top 20 and received the Legacy Award for our impactful work. Our flagship event, Race to Revival 3.0, saw teams deliver sustainable solutions to real-world business challenges.



Expressions

Expressions, LSR's literary society, hosted diverse events fostering creativity and literary engagement. The Monthly Living Poets Session encouraged poetry readings and critiques, while Brewed Beans, its newsletter, published seven editions featuring student submissions. Native Echoes, an anthology of poetry in 16 Indian languages, celebrated linguistic diversity. The Writer of the Month initiative recognized emerging talent. Collaborating with the North East Cell, Whispers of the Hill highlighted North Eastern literature. During Tarang '25, Expressions hosted Mad Hatter's Mic, Canon is a Social Construct, and Word Weave, along with a Pre-Tarang writing workshop, enriching LSR's literary culture.



HIVE: The Fine Arts Society

The year 2024-25 was an exciting one for Hive, the fine arts society of LSR. We kicked off with a 'mural walk,' introducing freshers to Hive's rich artistic legacy. With 48 members, we contributed to campus life, assisting in décor for the Olympian felicitation ceremony. Our Noor stall featured stickers, posters, crafts, face painting, and live sketching. We launched Hive's 2025 calendar, showcasing original artworks. Collaborations with NSS, Queer Collective, and WDC brought vibrant face-painting stalls. At Tarang, we hosted "Unveiled and Unraveled,"- an art exhibition, along with inter-college competitions and a session by esteemed alumna Tvesha Singh.

Interface

The Academic Forum of LSR, Interface, aims at bridging disciplines and encouraging academic collaboration. This year kicked off with a GD on the Mahabharata and saw the publication of 4 articles on its blog, Alexandria. A documentary screening on 'The Salem Witch Trials' was also held. We hosted an event titled Educharades, an academic take on the classic game of dumb charades. Continuing last year's contest, we organised the "Academic Meme Fest 2.0" to engage the student body with giggles. During Tarang'25, we conducted two events and one speaker session - "Banter Royale", where participants debated as certain personalities, and "Major Madness 2.0", an academic treasure hunt, followed by a speaker session by IFS Anmolam in collaboration with Levelup IAS.



National Cadet Corps

The National Cadet Corps, LSR (2024–25) achieved remarkable success, being recognised as the II Best SW Company in the Delhi Directorate. This accolade reflects the dedication of our cadets and the leadership of Captain Dr. Sarika Kalra, ANO NCC LSR, who received the ADG Commendation. Cadets participated in key camps including the Republic Day Camp, Thal Sainik Camp, CM Rally, and PM Rally. They also engaged in community initiatives such as Har Ghar Tiranga, Swachh Bharat performances, and visits to foster and retirement homes. The year concluded with Veerangana '25, our annual fest, featuring cadets from 20 Delhi University colleges.



LSR MUN And Public Speaking Society



The LSR MUN & Public Speaking Society, known for its legacy of fostering dialogue and diplomacy, started the year by recruiting 23 directors, 106 associates across 7 teams, and engaging 1200+ open society members. The Annual Freshers Competition was held in September, followed by speaker sessions featuring Ms. Tarana Farooqi (IOM-UN), Mr. Gopal Krishna Pillai, Dr. Axel Baisch, and Ambassador Preeti Saran. LSR MUN 2025 emphasized inclusivity through collaborations with CRY, NSS, and REACH. A Panel Discussion and Policy Case Competition on AI and militarization, in partnership with the Hertie School, was organized, alongside the publication of Concordia and The Denouement.

North East Cell

Commencing the academic year with a movie screening in collaboration with the Student Council, it was a year of a lot of firsts for the North-East Cell. For the first time, the cell participated in Teacher's Day celebrations and introduced the Books and Cinema Club, which hosted a reading circle as well as an interactive session with David Yanbem in collaboration with Hindu College.

Moreover, the cell collaborated with Expressions, organised a speaker session with Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty and Angellica Aribam, in addition to a gender sensitisation workshop with Gender for Bharat, a winter donation drive, and a performance at Tarang.



NSS LSR

This tenure commenced with 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' and the 10th International Yoga Day with Yogacharya Kajal Chaudhary & Dr. Pooja Kasera. Events like the Kargil Vijay Diwas session with Major-General Yashpal Singh Mor, the Mass-Pledge Against Drug Abuse, and Swachhta Hi Seva fostered patriotism and civic duty.

With its 700+ volunteers, NSS celebrated Independence Day, Daan Utsav, SVEEP, Purr-suit of Love, etc. Annual events Kala (Antar se Aage) and Noor (An Ode to the Light Within) further enriched engagement. With 27 projects driving change, NSS-LSR remained dedicated to impactful service.



Placement Cell



In the academic year 2024-25, the Placement Cell at LSR conducted 25 workshops, fostering a career-focused and training-oriented environment. Alumni sessions provided insights into placement and internship experiences. The Cell's social media saw significant growth, positioning it as a key resource for students. The placement season was highly dynamic, with over 50 companies—including McK-insey, BCG, Accenture, and Amazon—offering competitive roles across analytics, consulting, finance, marketing, research, technology, management, auditing, and teaching, reinforcing LSR's reputation as a hub for top-tier recruitment.

Prakriti

Prakriti, the Environment Society of LSR, promoted sustainability through various initiatives. The year began with a climate justice session featuring Justin Mathew, followed by an upcycling workshop encouraging creative reuse. The 'Plants Give-away' (Aaha Tamatar Bada Majedar) and a bio-enzyme workshop emphasised eco-friendly practices. Activities like eco-fabric printing, handmade paper-making, and an ecological-themed movie screening enhanced awareness. We earned recognition at the 67th DU Flower Show, winning the Green Cup among other awards. During Tarang, events like 'Frame Your Tale,' 'Paper for Paws,' and 'Shaz-am' inspired creativity and sustainability, motivating students to embrace a greener lifestyle.



REACH

REACH, the Equal Opportunity Cell of LSR, promoted inclusivity through diverse events in 2024-2025. The Orientation introduced REACH's initiatives, including the Swavlamban Resource Centre and its commitment to accessibility. The cell also organised various speaker sessions throughout the year. Dr. Michele Friedner explored disability and societal perceptions in India, while Dr. Meenakshi Pahuja highlighted the power of sports and resilience. Prof. Priti Prajapati's session on parenting visually impaired children was deeply personal and thought-provoking, and Dr. Megha Dhillon examined the intersection of gender, disability, and Indian cinema. Additionally, REACH participated in Noor, setting up a stall selling polaroids.



Quiz Society



The Quiz Society of LSR hosted two major events in 2025—Star Aligned in October and Justaju in March. Star Aligned blended pop culture, general knowledge, film trivia, and politics, challenging participants with thought-provoking and entertaining questions. Justaju, our flagship event, took the excitement further with a diverse lineup. The General Quiz tested broad knowledge, while the Mela Quiz explored music, entertainment, literature, and arts. The Sci-Biz Quiz combined science and business, and the India Quiz celebrated the nation's history, culture, and current affairs. Both events saw incredible enthusiasm and participation, cementing their place as highlights of the year.

Queer Collective

The Queer Collective felicitously experienced quite an animated tenure with orderly events and various initiatives. The events consisted of a talk session in collaboration with WDC on Exploitation of Marginalised Groups during Pinkwashing, a reading circle with the Elocution Society on poems of Adrienne Rich and Hoshang Merchant, and another one with the Hindu College Queer Collective on Rohit K. Dasgupta's Queer Sexuality: A Cultural Narrative of India's Historical Archive. It also held an engaging orientation for the first years, an informative sensitisation session with the student union, and a speaker session with Dr. Nancy Pathak on Queer Politics in South Asia: Legacy and Continuity of Resistances. The highlight was the long-awaited Pride Parade, which engulfed everyone in a shared ecstasy and placed love in the centrefold of resistance. Among QC's initiatives, notable efforts include launching its LinkedIn profile and blog Lavender Lexis, inviting the first round of submissions on A Space of One's Own, and sharing queer-friendly resources.



Saaz

Saaz saw incredible growth this year— from Kala and Noor, Annual Day and Felicitation Ceremony to AIIMS, we took every stage we could! Our brand new band, Lady Lydian, made a stellar debut this year by securing first position at its very first Battle of Bands at Bennett University. From there, the band has continued competing actively.

Another major highlight was organizing the Battle of Bands, which brought together some of the best bands from the DU circuit and beyond, and the Pair on Stage instrumental competition for Tarang'25— all while holding exciting cover challenges on Instagram at @saaz_lsr!



SC-ST Cell

The SC-ST Cell commenced the Academic Year 2024-25 with a series of engaging events aimed at fostering awareness amongst students. The year began with an Orientation Session introducing the cell's core values, followed by a screening of Dalit Defenders, which explored the intersection of caste and gender. The cell also hosted an online Basic IT Skills workshop to improve digital literacy. A Book Reading of Growing Up Untouchable in India was conducted to encourage meaningful discussions on social issues. In February, the cell, in collaboration with Bahubashi, performed Parayi Petta Panthirukulam, a Kerala-based folktale that centres on themes of wisdom and equality. These initiatives have sparked important conversations, encouraging growth, understanding, and active participation throughout the year.

Spic Macay

Spic Macay LSR Chapter began the 2024-25 session with a lively Pre-Orientation, where students showcased their talents in music, dance, and poetry. The Orientation featured guest speakers Mr Rajiv Giri and Shri Arun Sahay, who introduced SPIC MACAY's ethos. To foster camaraderie, Coffee Pe Charcha encouraged bonding through conversations and games, while Book Bhava, organised with Sisters of the People, sparked literary discussions. Our President, Preet Balhara, also Student Coordinator for Music in the Park and Sangeet Sudha, led volunteers in witnessing mesmerising performances. The society now eagerly prepares for VI-RASAT, its annual heritage festival celebrating India's rich culture.



Vaktritva

Vaktritva, the Hindi Debating Society of LSR, began the academic year with an orientation program and an exhibition debate to introduce first-year students to the society and debating tactics. The society engaged in deep discussions and deliberations during weekly mock debates. To enhance members' debating strategies, various workshops and seminars were conducted by esteemed debaters. We collaborated with DU Lit Fest at SRCC. Vaakshakti 2.0, an inter-college Turncoat Debate Competition, was organised during Tarang'25. We successfully hosted Tarkvyuh '25, a two-day inter-college parliamentary debate competition.



VAPP

The Voluntary Agency Placement Programme (VAPP) organized diverse events this tenure, fostering community and inspiring social change. Collaborating with NGOs, reinforced our commitment to social welfare. A key highlight was a collection drive with the NGO Jagriti, where students donated stationery, clothing, and bags for the underprivileged. We also hosted sessions with Teach for India, Gandhi Fellowship, Banyan Impact Fellowship, and Breakthrough Trust, guiding students toward social sector careers

Beyond virtual initiatives, we held offline events like a pottery workshop at Noor and Macrame and Texture Workshops at Tarang, promoting creativity, culture, and local artisans while nurturing holistic development.

Women Development Cell

The Women's Development Cell began with an orientation for new members. Key activities included "Let's Talk" sessions on multiple themes, which were dialogues for open student dialogues: a screening and discussion of Charulata led by Dr. Nitika Ladda, and a "Cross Roads" session with the Student Union. An online discussion on the male gaze and media representation, led by Dr. Sandhya Devesan Nambiar, engaged students. We also collaborated with DramSoc, LSR, for a mime play, "Bahut Khoobsurat", and hosted a face painting session with Hive. During Tarang, we organised a photo story competition and an art exhibition themed "Love and Rage."



Western Music Society

The 2024-25 session was yet another remarkable year for WMS! Beginning with a jam session on 5th September, followed by the release of the first-year members list on 1st October. The WMS team secured first place at the A Capella competition at BITS Pilani on 26th October. The first-years composed and performed a carol at college on 20th December. WMS in collaboration with Dhwani and Saaz, organised 'Sur-Taal' on 14th February and hosted the signature event, Hysteria, on 20th March. With 2.3k Instagram followers and multiple DU circuit accolades, WMS had a phenomenal year, thanks to the wonderful team.



World University Service

The World University Service proudly celebrates a year of dynamic events and meaningful initiatives. WUS leveraged its social media platforms to raise awareness on mental wellbeing in the workplace, financial literacy, and the importance of sign language in creating inclusive academic spaces.

We were honoured to host impactful sessions with IPS officer Mr. Nidhin Vaslan and Dr. Saurav Arora, providing valuable perspectives. A major highlight was the revival of our annual magazine, Panacea—a testament to the resilience and creativity of our community. Additionally, we are thrilled to introduce Celest, our society blog, envisioned as a vibrant platform for students to showcase their artistic expression and intellectual pursuits.



Dhwani

Spic Macay LSR Chapter began the 2024-25 session with a lively Pre-Orientation, where students showcased their talents in music, dance, and poetry. The Orientation featured guest speakers Mr Rajiv Giri and Shri Arun Sahay, who introduced SPIC MACAY's ethos. To foster camaraderie, Coffee Pe Charcha encouraged bonding through conversations and games, while Book Bhava, organised with Sisters of the People, sparked literary discussions. Our President, Preet Balhara, also Student Coordinator for Music in the Park and Sangeet Sudha, led volunteers in witnessing mesmerising performances. The society now eagerly prepares for VI-RASAT, its annual heritage festival celebrating India's rich culture.



NSO

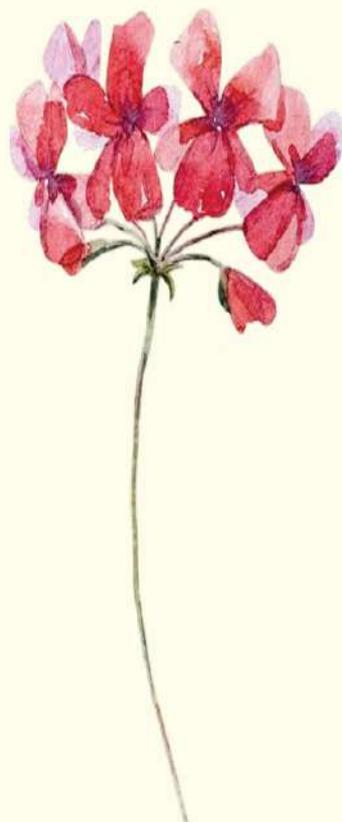
Life at Lady Shri Ram College is a vibrant blend of passion, perseverance, and pride. This year, events like a football workshop by Ayushmaan Chaturvedi and a women-centric boxing session championed strength and solidarity. The Annual Run, themed “Women’s Safety and Solidarity,” was a stride towards collective change. A defining moment was the felicitation of Olympians Manu Bhaker, Rhythm Sangwan, and Maheshwari Chauhan. Manu Bhaker, an icon of grit and grace, made history by clinching India’s first medal at the Paris Olympics 2024, setting the tone for the nation’s campaign. Dr. Meenakshi Pahuja Ma’am’s 18-km swim across the Arabian Sea, rooted in the motto of not polluting water, further echoed LSR’s spirit. What truly sets LSR Sports apart is its inclusive environment—where every student finds the freedom to thrive, express, and lead. LSR is more than a college—it’s a catalyst for change.



Department of Bachelor in Elementary Education

The academic year 2024–25 was a rich journey of intellectual discussions, experiential learning, and career-oriented initiatives. The Alumnae Meet offered insights into diverse career paths, while the visit to Digantar, Jaipur, deepened students' understanding of alternative education. Placement readiness sessions by experts such as Ms Heemal Handoo Bhat and Ms Ila Sarin equipped students with essential skills.

The highlight of the year, SEHAR 2025: National Seminar on Harnessing the Power of AI in Education, featured sessions with eminent speakers including Prof K. Srinivas, Ms Deepti Sawhney, Dr Rejaul Karim Barbhuiya, and Dr Arti Chopra. We also hosted inter-departmental competitions and a student-led play on AI's impact on education. The year focused on holistic learning, creativity, and meaningful collaboration.



Department of BA Programme

The academic year was marked by a range of online and offline events that enriched students' academic and personal development. Key highlights included Navigating Careers with Radhika Gandhok, Director at Barclays, offering insights into professional decision-making, and the Mentor-Mentee Meeting, which helped first-year students connect with seniors for practical advice.

Strength in Seeking, led by TEDx speaker Chetna Arora, co-founder of @thatdesi-psychologist, emphasised the importance of seeking professional help. Expressive Photography as a Tool for Self-Discovery with Habiba Begum explored storytelling through images.

The Role of Public Administration in Shaping India by Vivek Atray discussed its societal impact, while an interdisciplinary panel on modern conflicts with Dr Anjali Bhatia and Dr Leslie Keerthi Kumar examined global challenges. Sessions on law, youth leadership, negotiation, and policymaking further broadened students' academic horizons.



Department of Commerce

The Department of Commerce conducted diverse academic and extracurricular activities throughout the year. The Orientation Session (August 29) welcomed freshers into college life. The Indian Business League (October 3) tested students' business acumen, followed by the Alumni Meet (October 19), fostering networking. Smita Aggarwal's session on resilience (November 21) provided career insights. Teacher's Day (September 5) was celebrated with enthusiasm. NITI Aayog experts discussed tourism's economic role (February 6), while the Industrial Visit to Himachal Pradesh (March 2) showcased sustainable craftsmanship. Jyoti Sharma, an alumna, delivered a talk on entrepreneurship (March 10) which inspired students. **Comquest**: the department's annual fest (April 2-3) featured competitions in finance, HR, ESG, and marketing. **The YouTube Educator's** Forum (April 3) concluded the year with insights from Sunil Panda and CA Parag Gupta.



Department of Computer Science

During the 2024-25 academic year, the Computer Science Department at Lady Shri Ram College hosted a series of enriching events. Highlights included a career session on AI with Astitva Chopra, an SEO bootcamp, and a Cybersecurity Masterclass led by Shivam Agarwal. Workshops such as 'Use of AI in Excel' introduced students to AI-powered tools

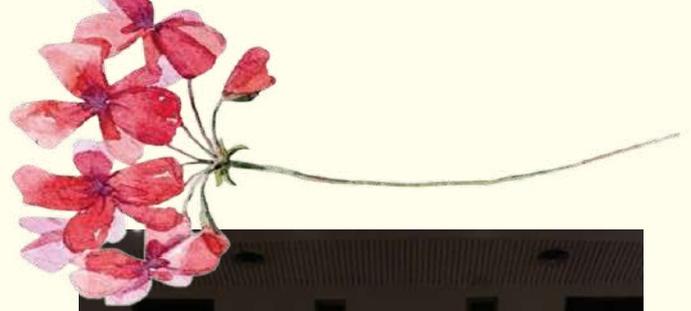
for data analysis.

Pre-Euphoria events like the Game Carnival and Scavenger Hunt promoted teamwork and creativity. Phygital Convergence explored the intersection of AR, VR, and IoT in industries, while competitions like Clocking the Threats and Spreadsheet Symphony tested students' cybersecurity and data skills.

These events offered hands-on learning experiences, fostered innovation, and equipped students with essential competencies for future tech-driven careers.

Department of Economics

The Department of Economics, committed to fostering academic dialogue and real-world engagement, organised a series of insightful speaker sessions and panel discussions with experts from academia, policy bodies, and international institutions. The flagship annual conference, EconVista'25, featured a keynote address by Dr Auguste Tano Kouamé (World Bank) on India's economic trajectory and global trends, alongside a high-profile panel including representatives from the World Bank, NABARD, JNU, NCAER, and independent economists. Discussions centred on global trade, financial inclusion, and sustainable development. Complementing the conference were speaker sessions with professionals from the Ministry of Finance, Delhi School of Economics, CII, and the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, addressing behavioural economics, fiscal policy, and regulatory reform. These initiatives offered students critical insights into economic policy, global challenges, and career pathways.



Department of English

The Department of English had a landmark year, marked by a range of events including museum visits, creative competitions such as Twist the Tale, the mental health initiative By Your Side, and an academic workshop on SOP writing by Dr Shernaz Cama (Director, UNESCO Parzor Project). Panel discussions included Read Beyond Borders with author Firat Sunel (Turkish Ambassador to India) and Mrs Ministhy S. (IAS officer, UP cadre, and translator).

The highlight was the international academic conference Litmus'25 (24–26 March 2025), themed Framing the Margins: Media and the Construction of Voice and Identity, featuring scholars from leading universities in India and abroad. Esteemed speakers included Prof Ian Almond (Georgetown University, Qatar), Ms Manisha Pande (Managing Editor, Newslandry), and Mr Gautam Vegda (poet, illustrator, academic). Pre-conference events fostered vibrant debates. Litmus'25 reaffirmed the department's commitment to global dialogue and inclusive scholarship.

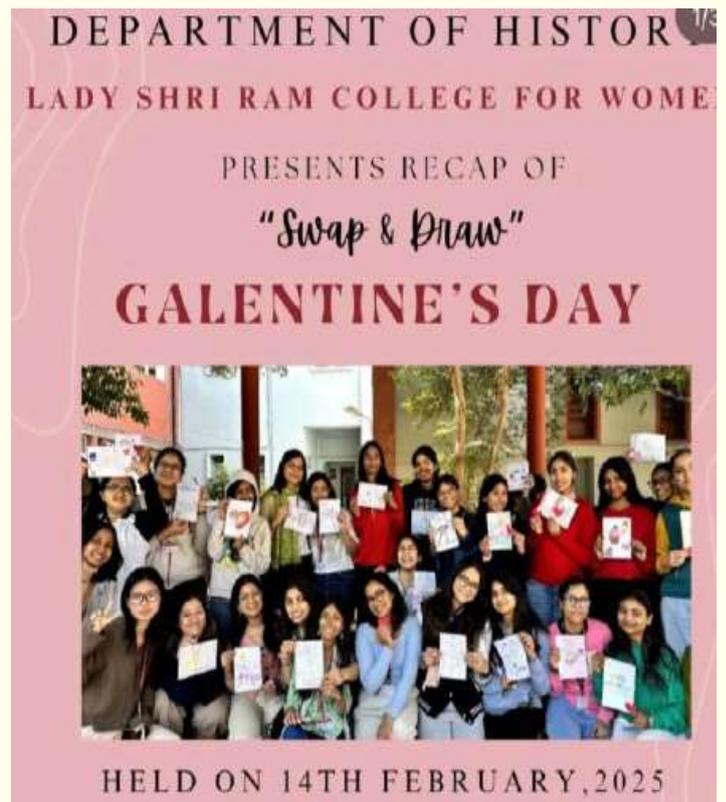
Department of Hindi

The Hindi Department conducted several noteworthy events throughout the academic year. A farewell ceremony for final-year students was held on May 7th, 2024, featuring performances and heartfelt wishes from faculty. On May 9th, the Annual Dr Bindu Agarwal Scholarship was awarded to meritorious students. Hindi Diwas was celebrated on September 14th, with Prof. Manju Mukul Kamble delivering an insightful lecture on the global status of Hindi. First-year students were warmly welcomed at the Newcomer Ceremony on October 3rd with cultural performances. The department's annual festival, Vaagartha 2025, took place on April 4th and 5th with Dr. K.G. Suresh offering valuable insights on "Literature in the Digital Age." Various competitions also engaged students, making the event a grand success. The department remains committed to academic and cultural excellence



Department of History

During the 2025 tenure, the History Association organised a range of academic and cultural events that deepened student engagement with the discipline. Highlights included 'Career Crossroads' with alumni, an IHC visit, academic writing sessions, and the Department Orientation. September brought a film screening, reading circle, Tales of Tradition Freshers' Party, College Heritage Walk, and a session with Ms Debatri Bhattacharjee. October featured a talk by Prof Francesca Orsini, a Partition Museum visit, Art Therapy, and a Poetry Session. November encouraged critical dialogue through sessions on gender and marginal histories. February offered experiential learning via a Rakhigarhi trip, heritage photowalk, and a Ghazal Listening Session. In March, sessions with Prof Corinne Lefèvre and Prof Nayanjot Lahiri, alongside a UPSC career discussion, offered academic and professional insights. In April we look forward to Pre-Maazi events, the release of Ijtihad, elections, and blog submissions, marking the end of a vibrant and fruitful tenure.



Department of Journalism



The Department of Journalism, led by President Afza Khan, General Secretary Ananya Nigam, and Treasurer Kashvi Trivedi, had a vibrant academic year (2024–25). With contributions from five core teams, the department undertook several initiatives. The biannual newsletter, **The Fourth Estate**, was launched by the content team led by Nirvanika Singh. **Countertalk**, the annual publication themed *The Matrix of Truth: Journalism in the 21st Century*, was overseen by Editor-in-Chief Vaishnavi Pandey.

Distinguished speakers included Dr Archana Kumari and Mr Amrish Saxena, along with alumni-led career guidance sessions. An interactive discussion with journalist Sangeeta Barooah Pisharoty offered insights on Northeast perspectives. Students visited All India Radio, Delhi School of Journalism, World Book Fair, and Doordarshan. Collaborations with the Debating Society, North-East Cell, and English Department fostered reading circles. Juxtapose, the annual academic meet, will explore media, technology, and society, featuring speakers like Professor Velislava Hillman (LSE).



The Department of Mathematics at LSR hosted a diverse range of events this academic year, fostering academic growth and community. From sessions on higher education, competitive exams, and career pathways to interactive workshops and lectures, students engaged in rich learning experiences. Inspiring conversations with Prof Narayan Rangaraj, Prof Jonaki Ghosh, and Dr Anuradha Chetiya broadened mathematical perspectives. Celebrations like Teachers' Day and Freshers' Day added memorable moments to the department's journey. A major highlight was the 31st Anupama Dua Paper Presentation and Scholarship event. The Annual Academic Meet, **Enigma 2025**, themed Maths Multiverse: Infinite Possibilities, was held on 7–8 April, featuring a keynote by Ms Resha Jain, a lecture by Dr Sashi Kant, and a finance panel. The year concluded with a warm farewell for the graduating Batch of 2026.

Department of Mathematics

LSR

Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy had a vibrant academic year, nurturing critical inquiry and intellectual engagement. A guest lecture by Prof. Balaganapathi Devarakonda on AI accountability and a mental well-being workshop by Prof. Preeti Dhawan were key highlights. The interdisciplinary essay competition, *Essay-vaganza*, delved into themes of morality, freedom, and historical narratives.

The Books and Documentaries Club held engaging discussions on 'Art for Art's Sake' and Women's Autonomy that further enriched philosophical discourse. *The Epistemology of Research* workshop, held in collaboration with Manipal University, equipped students with research tools and methods.

The annual academic meet, *Aletheia*, will feature Moral Nexus, a case competition, among other thematic events on Becoming: Finding the Self in the Absurd, fostering both academic and personal growth. Noesis, the academic journal, will host its annual Paper Presentation Competition spotlighting outstanding undergraduate research.



Department of Political Science

The Department of Political Science, committed to fostering critical dialogue and academic engagement, organised a range of enriching events in 2024–25. Prof. Sanjay Kumar delivered the inaugural lecture of the year. The department hosted sessions on Disability Worlds in India, exploring rights in healthcare, education, and employment, and on the US Presidential Election and Global Order, examining soft power and India–US relations. Talks by Prof. Sudha Pai on Dalit identity and Dr. Uttam Sinha on rivers in international relations further enhanced political discourse. Research paper writing workshops fostered academic skills, and a Parliament visit offered valuable insights into governance. Under *Polpourri'25*, discussions on narrative-building politics and events like *Mantiq* (paper presentation) and policy-making competitions encouraged intellectual engagement, strengthening students' understanding of contemporary political issues.



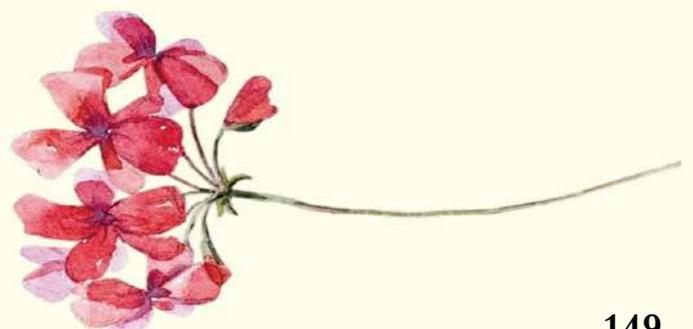
Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology, LSR, hosted a vibrant array of events in 2024–25, blending academic exploration, mental health awareness, and career guidance. The **Career Compass** series featured sessions on postgraduate studies and careers in India, the U.S., criminal psychology, and humanities placements. Mental Health Awareness Week, themed Echoes of Wellness, included alumni panels, fiction-based coping sessions, and workshops on time management and workplace well-being. Guest lectures covered topics such as grief, evolving family structures, resilience, and positive psychology. The Annual Academic Conference, v, themed Temporal Trajectories: Interweaving Generational Psyches, featured a keynote by Prof. N.K. Chadha, expert panels on generational shifts and personality, and workshops on digital dependence. With competitions, exhibitions, and an open mic, the department fostered meaningful academic dialogue and emotional well-being.



Department of Sanskrit

The Department of Sanskrit successfully hosted a series of enriching events during the academic year 2024–25, fostering deeper engagement with Sanskrit language and culture. During World Sanskrit Week, the department organised **Epics and Literature: The Sanskrit Quiz Challenge**, encouraging intellectual exploration. A notable speaker session, From Manuscripts to Media: Sanskrit's New Role in Journalism, featured Dr. Baldevanand Sagar, General Secretary of Bhartiya Patraakar Sangh, and Nidhi Jha, renowned Sanskrit newsreader, highlighting the language's evolving role in modern media. An Orientation Programme and Freshers' Party warmly welcomed new students. Inter-class competitions in prose reading, shloka recitation, sketching, and speech fostered creativity and linguistic skills. The year culminated with **SAMSKRITI'25**, the department's grand annual academic fest, celebrating Sanskrit's rich heritage, literature, and contemporary relevance through vibrant academic and cultural engagement.



Department of Sociology

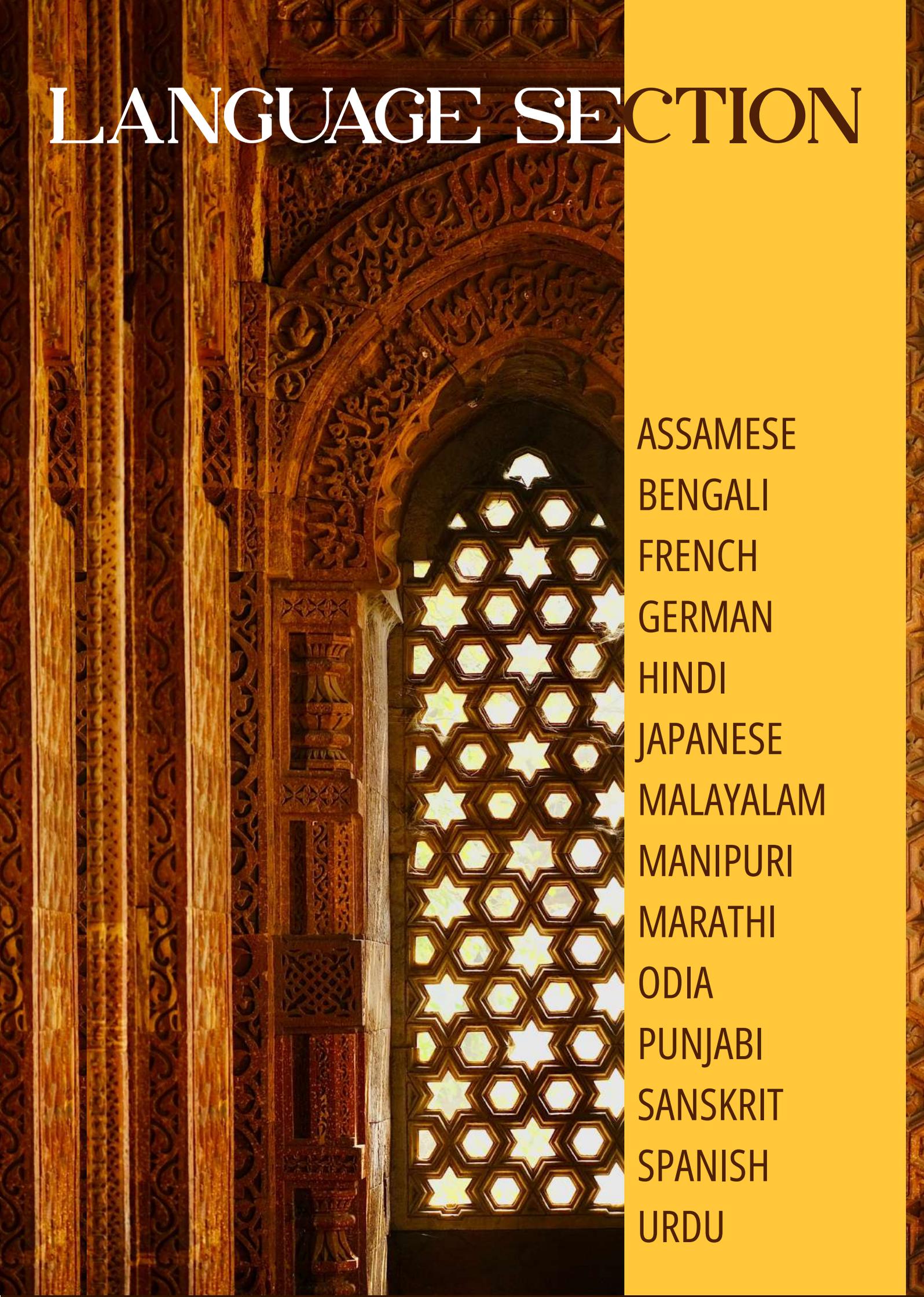
The Department of Sociology at Lady Shri Ram College hosted its inaugural guest lecture on September 19th, 2024, with Prof. Janaki Abraham speaking on *The Joys of Sociology: Training the Sociological Eye on Wedding Videos*. On October 17th, Prof. Swatie delivered a lecture on *The Power of Images of Atrocity and War*. The Reading Circle organised sessions including a screening of Adam Curtis' documentary *HyperNormalisation*. The department's journal, *Dastak*, launched its inaugural edition. **KULA'25** began on February 21st with a panel featuring Profs. Gayatri Nair and Vibodh Parthasarathi, who explored digital platforms, labour, and social change. Across two days, the fest included a Quiz, Declamation, Undergraduate Research Conference, and a student-led discussion. A curated exhibition on the '**Digital Anthropocene**' critically engaged students with evolving digital realities and their sociological implications.



Department of Statistics

In the 2024–2025 academic session, the Statistics Department organised a wide range of events. Sessions on placement preparation, internships, and master's programmes in India and data science offered valuable guidance. Statistics Week featured a Bingo Scavenger Hunt, *Confluence of Arts by Thought Showers*—The Discussion Club, a guesstimate quiz by Alpha—The Consulting Club, a speaker session by Dr Rajendra Prasad on *Design of Experiments*, and a Power BI workshop by Delta—The Analytics Club. The Annual Academic Meet, **Moments '25**, themed '*Decoding Outliers, Defining Outcomes*,' attracted over 3,300 registrations across competitions. The event was enriched by the presence of Chief Guest Mr Bharat Ramaswami and opened with a dynamic panel featuring Ms Shilpa Arora, Chef Gauri Kaushish Varma, Mr Jayesh Gupta, and Mr Sahil Puri, offering diverse insights into analytics and innovation.





LANGUAGE SECTION

ASSAMESE

BENGALI

FRENCH

GERMAN

HINDI

JAPANESE

MALAYALAM

MANIPURI

MARATHI

ODIA

PUNJABI

SANSKRIT

SPANISH

URDU

Artwork By: Priyanandini Gogoi, History, I Year



অসমীয়া

Assamese

নগৰবাসী জীৱনৰ সুখ-দুখ



নগৰ—

ৰঙীন বতাহত উৰুৱা সপোনৰ ঘৰ,
চকচকীয়া ৰাস্তাৰ পাৰেদি
দৌৰি ফুৰে মানুহৰ ব্যস্ততা।
নিয়ন পোহৰৰ মাজত
জীৱন যেন এক নাটক,
য'ত প্ৰতিজনে অভিনয় কৰে
নিজস্ব কামনাৰ চৰিত্ৰ।

নগৰ—

যি দিনে ৰঙা, নিশা উজ্জ্বল,
চিৰকাল চাৰিওফালে
ধ্বনি, গৰ্জন, ফ্ৰন্দন।
চাকৰি, ধন, যশ, প্ৰগতিৰ সন্ধানত
মানুহবোৰে বৈ থাকে
সদায় আঙুৱাই যাবলৈ,
কিন্তু ক'লৈ?

নগৰ—

বহুত সুবিধাৰ ঠাই,
হম্পিটেল, মল, থিয়েটাৰ, কফি শ্বপ—
সকলো হাতৰ আগত,
কিন্তু হৃদয়ৰ কাষত?
এই যে মানৱ সম্বন্ধবোৰ
বিলাই গৈছে অলক্ষ্যতে,
চিনাকি মুখবোৰ হ'ল অচিন খৰালি।
আধুনিকতাৰ দিশত দৌৰি
মানুহে পাহৰি গ'ল প্ৰকৃতি,
নৱপ্ৰযুক্তিৰ আঁচলত বান্ধি
জীৱন হ'ল যান্ত্ৰিক;
পাত-পাহি, পখী, নদী—
স্মৃতিৰ খিৰিকিত মাত্ৰ।
এটা সেউজ গছ দেখি
মনত উঠে গাঁওঘৰৰ ছবি।

নগৰৰ সপোনে

অস্ত যায় অলপ বেলিকিনো বেলিত।
একাকীভ্ব, মানসিক চাপ, অলেখ আশংকা

—

এইবোৰো থাকে অদৃশ্যকৈ,
চকুত দেখা নাযায়,
কিন্তু হৃদয়ত ওজন হৈ পৰে।
কিন্তু, নগৰ তাতেই শেষ নহয়।

এই ইট-পাথৰৰ মাজতো
আছে মৰমৰ স্পৰ্শ,
আছে মুকলি আকাশ চাই থকা চকু,
আছে গগনচুম্বী বিল্ডিংৰ ছাঁতত
জোনাকক স্পৰ্শ কৰাৰ সপোন।
আজি প্ৰয়োজন—

নগৰৰ মাজতো সেউজ পথ চিনিব,
মানুহৰ মাজতো আত্মীয়তাৰ ভাষা গঢ়িব।
সঁচাকৈয়ে, নগৰ জীৱন হ'ব পাৰে
এটা কবিতা—
যি লিখা হয় ব্যস্ততাৰ মাজতো,
কিন্তু তাতে থাকে শান্তিৰ ছাঁ।

Written By: Priyanandini Gogoi, History, I Year





বাংলা Bengali

Artwork By: Monishita Pal, Psychology, I Year

বহু যুগের ওপার হতে

আমাদের বাংলা সাহিত্যের ভান্ডার বোধ করি গুণ - কৌশলে সমৃদ্ধ, অনেক কবি, লেখক, গীতিকারের অনবদ্য, কালজয়ী সৃষ্টিতে মোড়া একটি আলো - আঁধারে পৃথিবী। এই সাহিত্য সম্ভার সবার জন্য, সবসময়েই উজাড় হয়ে থাকে - অপেক্ষা শুধু তাকে কখন কেউ আপন করে নেবে। তাহলেই যে তার অস্তিত্ব সার্থক হবে, রচনাকার তাঁর লক্ষ্য পূরণে সফল হবেন। এইখানে বলে রাখা দরকার, কেবল মনোরঞ্জনের জন্য সাহিত্য স্পর্শ করা নয়, সাহিত্য-কে আপন করে নিতে গেলে তাকে উপলব্ধি করতে হয়। নিজের দৈনন্দিনটাকে সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে একেবারে ওতপ্রোতভাবে জড়িয়ে দিতে পারলে তবেই এই কার্যে সফল হওয়া যায়: তা কার্যসিদ্ধির মাধ্যম যেমনি হোক না কেন - অর্থাৎ থিয়েটার, চলচ্চিত্র অথবা হাল আমলের ওয়েব সিরিজ। থিয়েটারে সাহিত্য বাস্তুয় হয়ে ওঠে কুশীলবদের প্রাণবন্ত অভিনয়ে আর চাফুস মাধ্যমের সাহায্যে পর্দায় কোনো কাহিনীকে জীবন্ত করে ফুটিয়ে তোলার দায়িত্ব বর্তায় পরিচালকের উপর। তাই তো বার বার সাহিত্য ফিরে আসে বহু যুগের ওপার হতে - ২০ শতকের 'পরিণীতা' বা ২১-এর 'চোখের বালি' হয়ে। আগেই বলেছি, বাংলা সাহিত্যের এক- একটি রচনা কালজয়ী, যুগের পর যুগ সেগুলোর কাছে ফিরে আশা যায়, নতুন করে খুঁজে পাওয়া যায়। প্রত্যেক পাঠকমন রচনাটি নিজের মতন করে বুঝে নেয়। তারপর যখন নতুন এক মোড়কে মুড়ে সেটি পর্দায় ফুটিয়ে তুলতে চায়, তখন সেটি তার সৃজনশীল ক্ষমতায় নতুন রূপ পায়। এবং গল্পের মাল-মশলা একেবারে খাঁটি বলেই কিন্তু সে বার বার আমাদের কাছে ফিরে আসে, নতুন চোখে, নতুন রূপে। সৃজনশীল স্বাধীনতার সুবাদে অনেকসময় মূল কাহিনীটির পরিবর্তিত রূপ তুলে ধরা হয় পর্দায়- সেটি কেউ কেউ সমর্থন করলেও অনেক সাহিত্য ভক্তদেরই কিন্তু প্রিয় উপন্যাসের উপর এই অপ্রোপচার সহ্য হয় না। তবে কি সাহিত্যের 'রী -টেলিং' একেবারেই বন্ধ করে দিতে হবে? নিজের মতন করে নতুন কিছু যদি নাই বা তুলে ধরি, তবে দর্শক আসবে কি? তার থেকেও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রশ্ন হল - কারোর সৃজনশীল সম্বাটিকে কি এভাবে বাধা দেওয়া যায়? পাঠকদের মধ্যে মতের অমিল তো থাকতেই পারে; তাই বলে কি কারোর ভাবনাটিকে অসম্মান করা উচিত?

ব্যক্তিগত মত জানতে চাইলে বলি, সাহিত্য পড়া আর চাফুস কোনো কাহিনীকে জীবন্ত হয়ে উঠতে দেখার মধ্যে বিস্তর পার্থক্য। কিছু পড়ার সময় আমাদের সব ইন্দ্রিয় সজাগ থাকে, কল্পনাশক্তি প্রবল, নিজেই এক-একটা ছবি কল্পনা করে নিজের মনেই পর পর বসাতে থাকি সেগুলো, কাহিনীটিকে উপলব্ধি করি কল্পনার দৃষ্টি দিয়ে। চাফুস পর্দার ব্যাপার কিন্তু আলাদা। সেইক্ষেত্রে, আমরা পরিচালকের চোখ দিয়েই গল্পটা দেখি, বুঝি, উপভোগ করি। তাই চাফুস পর্দায় মানুষকে আকৃষ্ট করে তার মনোসংযোগ ধরে রাখার বাড়তি খাটুনি আছে। তাই চাফুস মাধ্যমে এমন কিছু 'এলিমেন্টস' ঢোকাতে হয় যা দর্শকের মনে দাগ কাটবে, পর্দার ফ্রেমের পরিবেশটাকে অনেক বেশি জোড়ালো করে তুলবে। তাই পরিবর্তন আবশ্যিক। মাধ্যমের বদল হলে গল্প বলার ধরণ তো বদলাবেই! তবে তা শৈল্পিক সততা রক্ষা করেই। মূল রচনাশৈলী বা চারিত্রিক বৈশিষ্ট্যে কোনো গুরুতর পরিবর্তন স্বাভাবিক রূপেই কাম্য নয়। তাই 'রী -টেলিং'-এর নিয়মে সৃজনশীল স্বাধীনতা হয়ত একটু হলেও সীমিত। মূল রচনাটা তো হারিয়ে যাওয়া এক সময়ের সৃষ্টি, তাই এই নিয়ম মেনে নিতে কোনো নিষেধ নেই। বরং রোমাঞ্চ আছে- দূরের এক পৃথিবীকে ফের জীবন্ত করে তোলার রোমাঞ্চ, বহু যুগের ওপার হতে ফের বাঁচতে শেখার রোমাঞ্চ।

Written By: Aishichchha Dutta, History
Department, I Year



French

Artwork By: Dorothy Bhuyan, English, II Year



C'est La Troisième An- née.



Aujourd'hui, comme toujours, les feuilles oscillent dans le vent et les oiseaux gazouillent. Le ciel est bleu et le soleil brille doucement. C'est un jour comme les autres. Mais en fait, c'est pas du tout comme toujours.

Je me lève tôt, je me tire du lit. Je me prépare pour partir, sortant de la maison avec un sandwich dans une main, mon portable et mes lunettes dans l'autre. À 7h30 du matin, je suis à la gare du métro. Je ne me souviens pas la dernière fois que j'ai juste lu un roman que j'avais hâte de finir pendant toute la journée, mangeant des collations que ma mère m'avait donné de l'argent pour acheter du magasin du coin. Je pense quelquefois à mon enfance: les plaisirs simples de recevoir un autocollant étoile dans le cahier, partager les tiffins avec les potes, jouer à des jeux dans le parc le soir.

Mais le monde de mon enfance est éloigné du monde actuel. Le présent, c'est un moment très important, tout le monde me dit. "As-tu pensé à ton avenir, ta carrière?" "Oui, j'ai des options mais je n'ai pas encore décidé." Assister les classes et obtenir les bonnes notes à l'uni, préparer les candidatures pour le Masters, faire les stages, chaque jour, quelque chose de nouveau m'occupe. Une longue liste de tâches dont je suis tout le temps en train de cocher des éléments.

Ces jours-la, il paraît que l'esprit c'est pour faire des choses impressionnantes et le corps pour rester en bonne santé. Et moi, si je n'existe pas sur un CV ou une feuille de papier "très important", c'est comme je n'existe pas en vrai.

Maintenant c'est 7pm. Je rentre chez moi à pied, voyant le coucher du soleil. J'écoute de la musique, ça m'aide d'échapper mes soucis, et pour un moment, je suis calme, contente. Mais au fond de ma tête, je sais que tout va recommencer demain. La troisième année, c'est une période d'actions, pas d'émotions, mais je souhaite fortement que ce soit l'envers.

Written by: Sarah Ali, Psychology Department, IIIrd Year

Edited by: Jiya Jawa, Philosophy Department, IInd Year



Voici une recette pour décuire une amitié:



Pictures by: Bhavya Jorwal , Economics department, IInd year

Quand vous avez fini, il n'y a plus à faire. Tant pis, vous avez fait de votre mieux. Il y avait du macaroni et il y avait du fromage. Maintenant, il n'y a pas de longues heures à réfléchir, ou à languir. Non, vous devez oublier le repas raté. Faites quelque chose d'autre: allez au parc, lisez un roman, étudiez pour un examen.

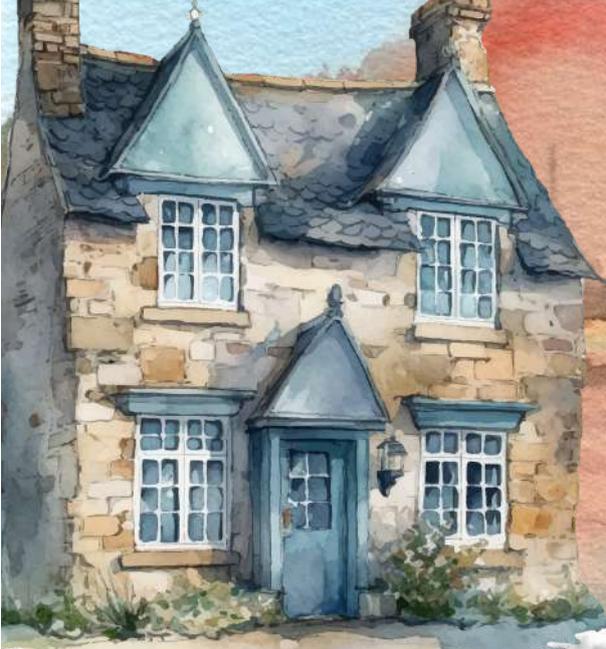
Pour décuire, premièrement vous allez égoutter la crème et le lait. Démélangez et mettez-la en bouteille au fond du réfrigérateur, ne la dites pas quel roman vous avez lu, n'ailles pas au même parc, elle vous dira joyeux anniversaire, vous ne répondrez pas.

Puis, ramassez les morceaux de fromage. Elles ressemblent à des vestiges: les peintures, les chansons, les films, vous en aurez horreur. Le livre que vous lui avez prêté— celle dont vous deux avez parlé sans arrêt— vous ne le verrez jamais.

Finalement, vous allez debouillir le macaroni, et remettez-le dans sa boîte. Dès que c'est fini, vous vous sentez impuissant, sans défense. Vous serez vidé, vous valserez seul.



Written by: Jiya Jawa, Philosophy Department, IInd Year



DEUTSCH

German



Artwork By: Khushi Joshi, Psychology, II Year

Zwischen Kulturen: Wenn Unterschiede verbinden

Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR) ist ebenso für akademische Exzellenz, feministische Bildung und gesellschaftliches Engagement bekannt wie für kulturelle Vielfalt. Jeden Sommer kommen junge Frauen aus verschiedenen Staaten Indiens – von Meghalaya bis Maharashtra, von Tamil Nadu bis Himachal Pradesh – mit Hoffnungen, Träumen und Dialekten. Manche sind weit gereist, manche kommen aus der Nachbarschaft. Doch was sie alle verbindet, ist der Wunsch zu lernen, sich zu entfalten – und ein Teil dieser Gemeinschaft zu sein.

Einerseits ist diese kulturelle Diversität eine Stärke, andererseits auch Herausforderungen. Es gibt nicht nur offensichtliche Unterschiede wie Sprache, Kleidung oder Akzente, sondern auch subtile Unterschiede in Denkweisen, Kommunikationsstilen und gesellschaftlichen Normen. Eine flapsige Bemerkung, die in einer Stadt als humorvoll gilt, kann bei jemandem aus einem anderen Kontext Empörung sein.

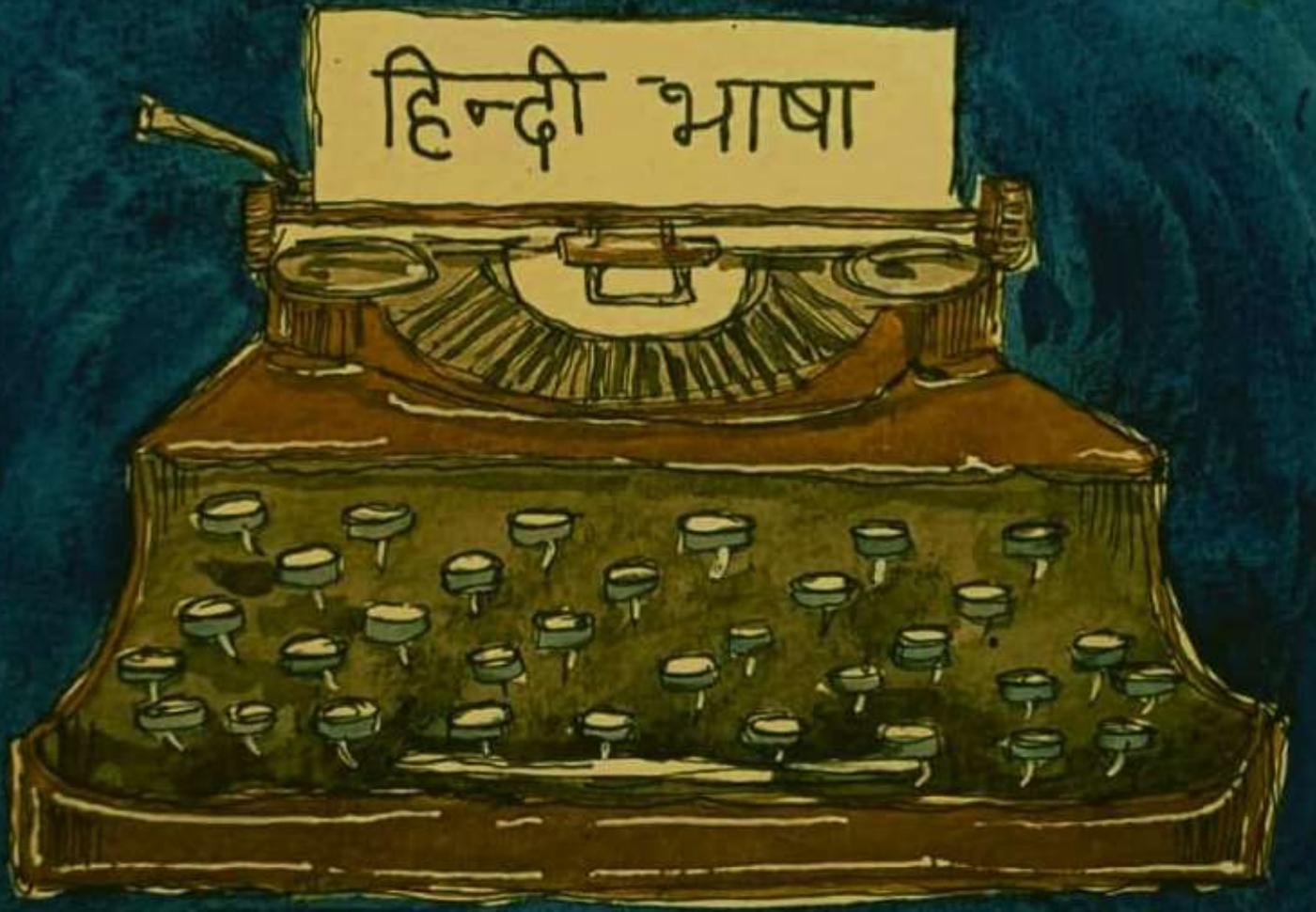
Solche Missverständnisse schleichen sich oft unbemerkt ein – sei es in Gruppendiskussionen im Seminarraum, bei Treffen studentischer Initiativen oder beim Austausch in der Cafeteria. Vielleicht spricht eine Studentin Hindi nicht fließend und wird dadurch fälschlicherweise als distanziert wahrgenommen. Vielleicht hält eine andere sich zurück, weil in ihrer Heimatregion Zurückhaltung als höflich gilt – was in der offenen Diskussionskultur von LSR aber als Desinteresse interpretiert wird. Solche Missverständnisse können das Gefühl von Zugehörigkeit beeinträchtigen – obwohl sie sich leicht durch Achtsamkeit vermeiden können.

Was können wir tun? Der erste Schritt ist ein Perspektivwechsel: Statt zu vergleichen, soll man versuchen, sie zu verstehen. Die Bereitschaft, anderen ohne Eile zuzuhören, schafft Vertrauen. Der offene Austausch, über Sprache, Herkunft, Glauben oder Alltagserfahrungen, kann neue Freundschaften begründen. LSR bietet mit seinen vielfältigen Clubs, Projekten und Initiativen – vom North East Cell bis zu Bahubashi – Plattformen für genau diesen interkulturellen Dialog.

Hier findet Lernen sowohl im Klassenraum als auch in den Gesprächen nach der Vorlesung, beim gemeinsamen Arbeiten an einem Plakat für ein Event oder beim Teilen eines Mittagessens statt. Es sind diese alltäglichen Momente, in denen wir erkennen, wie unterschiedlich und verbunden wir sind. Die Fähigkeit, mit Vielfalt umzugehen, ist dabei nicht nur persönlich bereichernd, sondern auch eine Schlüsselkompetenz in einer globalisierten Welt.

Kulturelle Missverständnisse sind keine Fehler, sondern Gelegenheiten zum Lernen – wenn wir bereit sind, uns auf andere einzulassen. Lady Shri Ram College ist ein Raum, in dem solche Begegnungen möglich sind. Wer mit offenen Augen, offenem Herzen und einem offenen Geist durch die Flure dieses Campus geht, wird bald merken: Vielfalt ist nicht das Problem – sie ist die Antwort.





Artwork By: Nityaa Aryal, Economics, III Year

हिन्दी

संपादक मंडल

शिवानी कुमारी -तृतीय वर्ष ,

हिंदी ऑनर्स

कोमल साह- तृतीय वर्ष ,

हिंदी ऑनर्स

परामर्श- सुश्री नेहा कुमारी

रौशनी और सियाही की आखिरी सरज़मीन

रात की अतल गहराइयों में, जब कायनात खामोश थी और वक्त जैसे सुन्न पड़ा था, एक उजाड़ खंडहर में दो साए आमने-सामने थे। हवा में एक अजीब सी सर्द लरज़िश थी, जैसे वजूद की हड्डियाँ चटकने को थीं। "तुम फिर आ पहुँचे?" ज़िन्दगी ने गहरी आह भरते हुए पूछा।

मौत ने होंठों पर एक रहस्यमयी मुस्कान लाई, "गया ही कब था? मैं तो तुम्हारा हम साया हूँ, तुम्हारी परछाई की तरह तुम्हारे साथ चलता हूँ।" ज़िन्दगी की हंसी तल्लू से लबरेज़ थी, "हाँ, तुम्हारी परछाई हमेशा मुझसे लिपटी रहती है। मगर क्या तुमने कभी सोचा कि तुम कितने संगदिल हो? जब भी कोई शबाब अपनी बुलंदी को पहुँचता है, तुम उसे ज़वाल की ओर ढकेल देते हो। जब भी कोई मोहब्बत अपनी इन्तेहा पर होती है, तुम उसे जुदाई की सलीब पर टाँग देते हो। तुम मेरी हर मुस्कराहट में एक अनदेखी कन्न खोद देते हो।

मौत ने गहरी साँस ली, रात की सियाही में आँखें गड़ा दीं। "तुम्हारा शिकवा जायज़ है, मगर क्या तुमने कभी सोचा कि मेरे बग़ैर तुम्हारा मायना क्या रह जाएगा? अगर मैं न होऊँ, तो तुम्हारा हुस्न भी बेमानी हो जाएगा। मोहब्बत अगर अमर हो जाए, तो उसकी तड़प कहाँ रहेगी? अगर फूल कभी न मुरझाए, तो बहार की क्रीमत कौन समझेगा?

मैं तुम्हारा ख़ात्मा नहीं, तुम्हारी वजह हूँ। मैं वक्रत की जंजीर में तुम्हें कैद करता हूँ ताकि तुम हर लम्हे की शिद्दत महसूस कर सको।" ठीक उसी पल, एक हल्की सी आहट हुई। अंधेरे की गहराइयों से एक तीसरा साया उभरा—वक्रत। उसकी मौजूदगी ने हवा को और भारी कर दिया। ज़िन्दगी और मौत दोनों ने उसकी ओर देखा।

वक्रत ने एक ठहरी हुई आवाज़ में कहा, "तुम दोनों यूँ ही तकरार करते रहोगे, मगर सच तो यह है कि मैं ही तुम्हारी कहानी का असली रचनाकार हूँ। ज़िन्दगी, तुम मेरी धड़कनों में सांस लेती हो और मौत, तुम मेरे ठहराव में बसती हो।"

ज़िन्दगी ने वक्रत की ओर देखा, "मगर तुम तो हमेशा मुझे छलते रहे हो। जब मैं खिलने लगती हूँ, तुम मेरे पलों को लूट लेते हो। मेरी सबसे हसीन घड़ियाँ तुम्हारी रेत में घुलकर खत्म हो जाती हैं।"

वक्रत हल्का सा मुस्कराया, "अगर मैं न होऊँ, तो तुम्हें अपने लम्हों की क्रीमत कैसे पता चलेगी? मैं ही तो हूँ जो तुम्हें मोहब्बत की बेचैनी देता हूँ, तुम्हारी साँसों में हलचल भरता हूँ। मैं ही तुम्हारी नज़रों में इंतज़ार का रंग भरता हूँ।"

मौत ने उसकी बात काटते हुए कहा, "और मेरे लिए? मेरे हिस्से में क्या आता है?"

वक्रत ने एक लंबी साँस ली। "तुम्हारे हिस्से में सब कुछ आता है, लेकिन देर से। तुम्हारा इंतज़ार सबसे लंबा होता है। लोग ज़िन्दगी से लिपटते हैं, मुझसे लड़ते हैं, और तुमसे भागते हैं। मगर आखिर में, हर कोई तुम्हारी बाहों में समा ही जाता है।"

ज़िन्दगी ने एक गहरी साँस ली। "तो यही सच है? हम दोनों तुम्हारे ही मोहरे हैं? हम जितना भी लड़ लें, उलझ लें, आखिर में हमें तुम्हारी चालों के आगे झुकना ही होगा?"

वक्रत ने एक शांति भरी मुस्कान के साथ कहा, "हाँ, क्योंकि मैं ही वो दरिया हूँ जिसमें तुम दोनों बहते हो। तुम्हारी कहानी, तुम्हारा इश्क़, तुम्हारा वजूद—सब मुझमें ही ढलता है।"

सूरज की पहली किरणें खंडहर की टूटी दीवारों पर पड़ीं। ज़िन्दगी उठ खड़ी हुई, अपने उजले दामन को सँवारा और हल्की मुस्कान के साथ बोली, "तो फिर मिलेंगे, उसी पुराने ढंग से।"

लेकिन ये अंत नहीं था। वक्रत कुछ कदम चलकर ठिठका।

उसने पीछे मुड़कर देखा—ज़िन्दगी अब भी मुंदी आँखों से आसमान की ओर देख रही थी, जैसे किसी इबादत में मग्न हो। मौत ने अपनी चुप्पी ओढ़ रखी थी, मगर उसकी आँखों में एक गहरी थकान थी, जैसे सदियों की तन्हाई ने उस में डेरा डाल रखा हो।

वक्रत धीमे-धीमे लौट आया। "क्या तुम दोनों जानना नहीं चाहते कि मैं क्यों चलता हूँ?" उसकी आवाज़ अब एक सदी पुराने दरवाज़े

की तरह भारी थी।

ज़िन्दगी और मौत ने चौंककर उसकी ओर देखा।

"मैं चलता हूँ," वक्रत बोला, "क्योंकि ठहराव मौत से भी गहरा ज़हर है। मैं चलता हूँ, ताकि तुम दोनों अपने मायनों में बने रहो। ज़िन्दगी अगर ठहर जाए, तो वो मौत से भी ज़्यादा बेरहम हो जाती है। और मौत अगर ठहर जाए, तो वो इंसान को अमरता का धोखा देकर, उसे धीरे-धीरे सुलगने पर मजबूर कर देती है।"

मौत ने सर झुका लिया। "शायद इसलिए मेरी आगोश भी राहत बन जाती है, जब इंसान बहुत थक चुका होता है।"

ज़िन्दगी ने हौले से कहा, "और शायद इसलिए मेरी बाँहों से भी लोग भागते हैं, जब मैं बोझ बन जाती हूँ।"

वक्रत मुस्कराया। "इसीलिए मैं किसी का नहीं हूँ—न ज़िन्दगी का, न मौत का। मैं बस चलता हूँ, ताकि हर चीज़ अपनी जगह बदलती रहे। मोहब्बत मुकम्मल न हो, मगर अधूरी भी न रहे। दर्द असीम न हो, मगर महसूस ज़रूर हो। हर खुशी अपने वजूद के साथ हो, मगर उस पर एक शिकन की परछाई ज़रूर पड़े। यही तो है इंसानी जज़्बात का संगीत बेतुके सुरों में छुपा हुआ एक मुकम्मल तराना।" अब तीनों कुछ देर खामोश रहे। हवा और ठंडी हो चली थी, मगर उसमें अब एक सुकून की गरमाहट घुल चुकी थी।

ज़िन्दगी ने मुस्कराकर कहा, "शायद अब मैं समझने लगी हूँ—मेरे हर लम्हे की रौशनी तुम्हारे चलते ही है।"

मौत ने धीरे से कहा, "और मेरी हर खामोशी तुम्हारे रुकने से ही है।"

वक्रत ने अपनी बात पूरी की, "और मैं... मैं सिर्फ़ एक राह हूँ। न शुरुआत हूँ, न अंत। मैं बस एक सफ़र हूँ, जिसे तुम दोनों अपनी मौजूदगी से मानी देते हो।"

खंडहर अब भी वहीं था, मगर अब वो वीरान नहीं लगता था। वहाँ तीन परछाइयाँ थीं—ज़िन्दगी, मौत, और वक्रत—जो अब तकरार नहीं कर रहे थे। बस बैठे थे, एक-दूसरे की मौन संगत में, जैसे किसी सदी पुराने सुर की तान। और तब, कहीं दूर किसी बच्चे की पहली किलकारी गूँजी और किसी बूढ़े की आँखें स्थिर हो गईं।

और घड़ी की सुइयाँ, अपनी रफ़्तार में, फिर से चल पड़ीं...

आशिमा रियाज़ अली, तृतीय वर्ष, राजनीति विज्ञान विभाग

वे दिन

आज ही होना था ये, मैं लड़का क्यों नहीं हो गई... नानी मैं क्या करूँ!!!"

मृदला की उलझन नहीं सुलझ रही थी। आज उसकी चित्रांकन प्रतियोगिता थी। वो भी बेलूर मठ की ओर से। पक्का कोई धार्मिक टॉपिक मिलेगा। ये सोचकर वो रो पड़ी। ये मौका पूरे वर्ष में केवल एक बार आता था ये बहुत ज़रूरी था और मृदला का मासिक चक्र आज से शुरू हो गया था।

बचपन से मृदला पुराणों और वेदों में असीम आस्था रख कर बड़ी हुई है। उसे पता था इन दिनों में भगवान से जुड़ी चीज़ों से दूर रहना चाहिए।

अब धर्म संकट ये है कि आज अगर वो चित्र बनाएगी तो वो उस कागज़ को कैसे स्पर्श करेगी जिसमें उसने स्वयं भगवान को अंकित किया है।

वो मठ पहुंच जाती है और अपना कागज़ लेकर बैठ जाती है। उसकी नानी उसकी उलझन समझ जाती है और उसे दूर से ही "' आल द बेस्ट "' दिखाती हैं।

मृदला उलझन सुलझाते सुलझाते पेंसिल स्केच बना लेती है। अब उसे डर लगने लगता है कि कहीं उसने रंग भर दिया तो वो चित्र पूजा करने योग्य तो नहीं होगा और उसके स्पर्श मात्र से उसे पाप चढ़ेगा। ये महीना भी न नन्हीं सी जान पर कितना बोझ डाले हुए है। चिंता से उसका सर फटा जा रहा था साथ ही साथ पेट व अन्य अंगों में मासिक दर्द हिलोरे मार रहा था। पैरों का तो फूल कर बुरा हाल था।

इतने में मन्दिर की घंटी बजी जो इस बात का सूचक थी कि अब मात्र एक घंटा शेष है।

अचानक उसकी नज़र अपनी पेंसिल बॉक्स पर पड़ी जिसमें बांसुरी वाली "' की चेन "' लगी हुई थी। ये चाभी का छल्ला उसकी मां ने उसे अपने अंतिम वक्त पर दिया था और साथ ही कहा था कि उनके बाद कृष्ण उसके पथ प्रदर्शक हैं। मृदला की आंखों से खुशी के आंसू छलक पड़े उसे स्मरण हो आया कि कृष्ण ने कहा है, "कर्म धर्म से बड़ा है"। बस ये एक ख्याल उसकी हर पीड़ा हर लेता है।

शाम को आठ बजे के बाद प्रतियोगिता का फल घोषित होता है और कनिष्ठ वर्ग में प्रथम स्थान मृदला को मिलता है। जब मृदला इनाम लेने मंच पर जाती है तो उसे सामने टंगी अपनी ड्राइंग नज़र आती है। उसे देखकर लगता है जैसे कृष्ण उसे देख मुस्करा रहे हैं और मां ऊपर आसमान में तारा बनी उसे आशीष दे रही है।

अन्वेषा राय, चतुर्थ वर्ष, बी.एल.एड

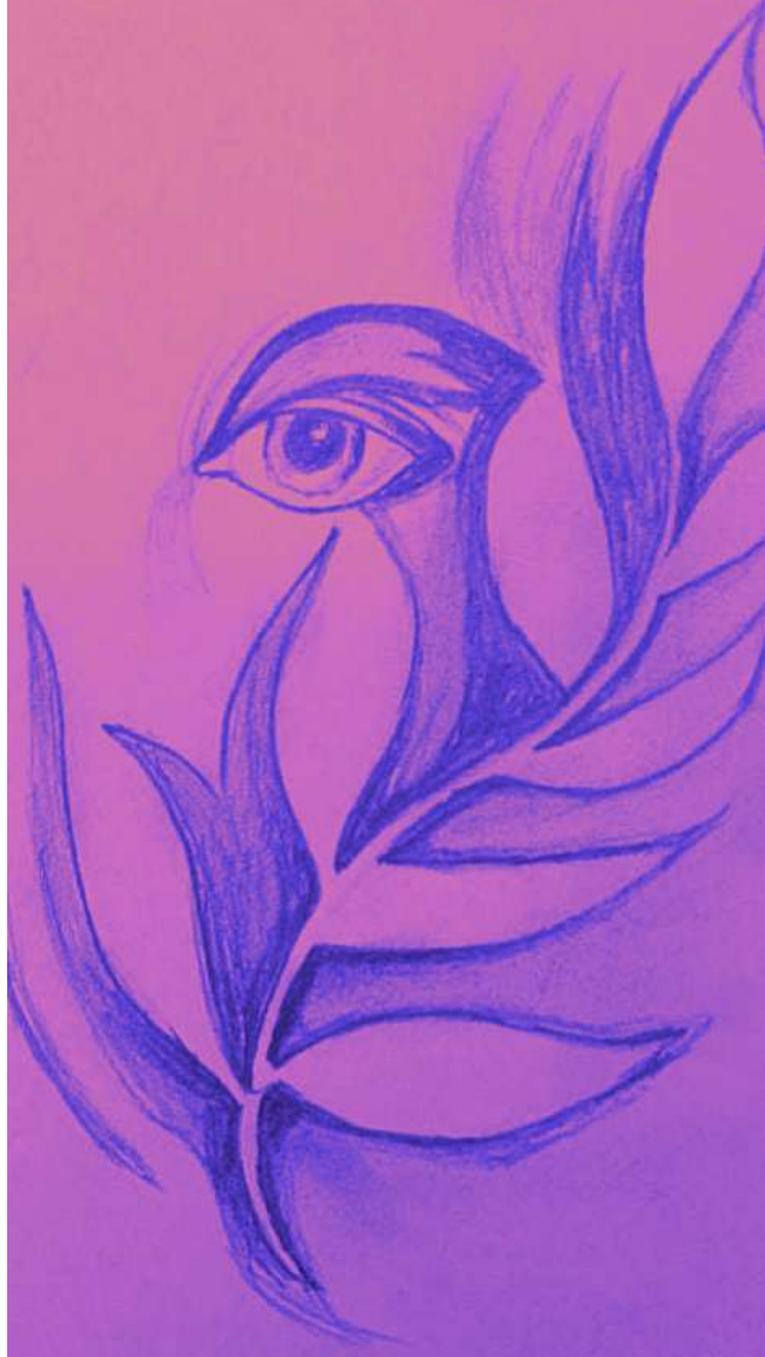
मैं चुप रह गई

मैं चुप रह गई
यह सोचकर कि
पहले क्रोधाग्नि ठंडी हो जाए,
कहीं ऐसा ना हो कि
लफ्ज सही पर
लहजा गलत हो जाए।

विश्वास का धागा छूटा था
किसी अपने पर से भरोसा टूटा था.
शिकायतें थी हजार
मैंने सोचा बार-बार
शिकायतों के राज खोलूँगी
एक-एक कर सब बोलूँगी।

मेरे दिल ने मुझसे कुछ कहा
हिम्मत जुटाकर मैंने बोलना चाहा,
पर बोलने से पहले बातें बेमतलब हो गईं
मेरी नाराज़गी असमंजस में खो गई,
किसी की भावनाओं को ठेस ना पहुँच जाए,
क्रोध में मेरा मन कुछ गलत ना कर जाए,
समय बीतता गया, दूरियाँ बढ़ती गईं
उम्मीद की लौ छोटी हो गई,
इंतजार किया, फिर कुछ अपना हिस्सा वहीं छोड़
मैं भी आगे बढ़ गई।
हर नाराज़गी कहकर बयां नहीं होती
सच बताऊँ तो मैंने करना भी नहीं चाहा
ऐसी बात नहीं है
मेरे पास विकल्प नहीं दूजा था,
पर उस समय मैंने बोलने से ज़्यादा
चुप रहने में शांति को खोजा था।
सही था या गलत, पता नहीं
पर खुद से मुझे भी कोई शिकायत नहीं,
एक और बार मेरी खामोशी
लफ्जों से कुछ ज्यादा कह गई,
कहने के लिए बहुत कुछ था
पर मैं चुप रह गई।

नेहा, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग



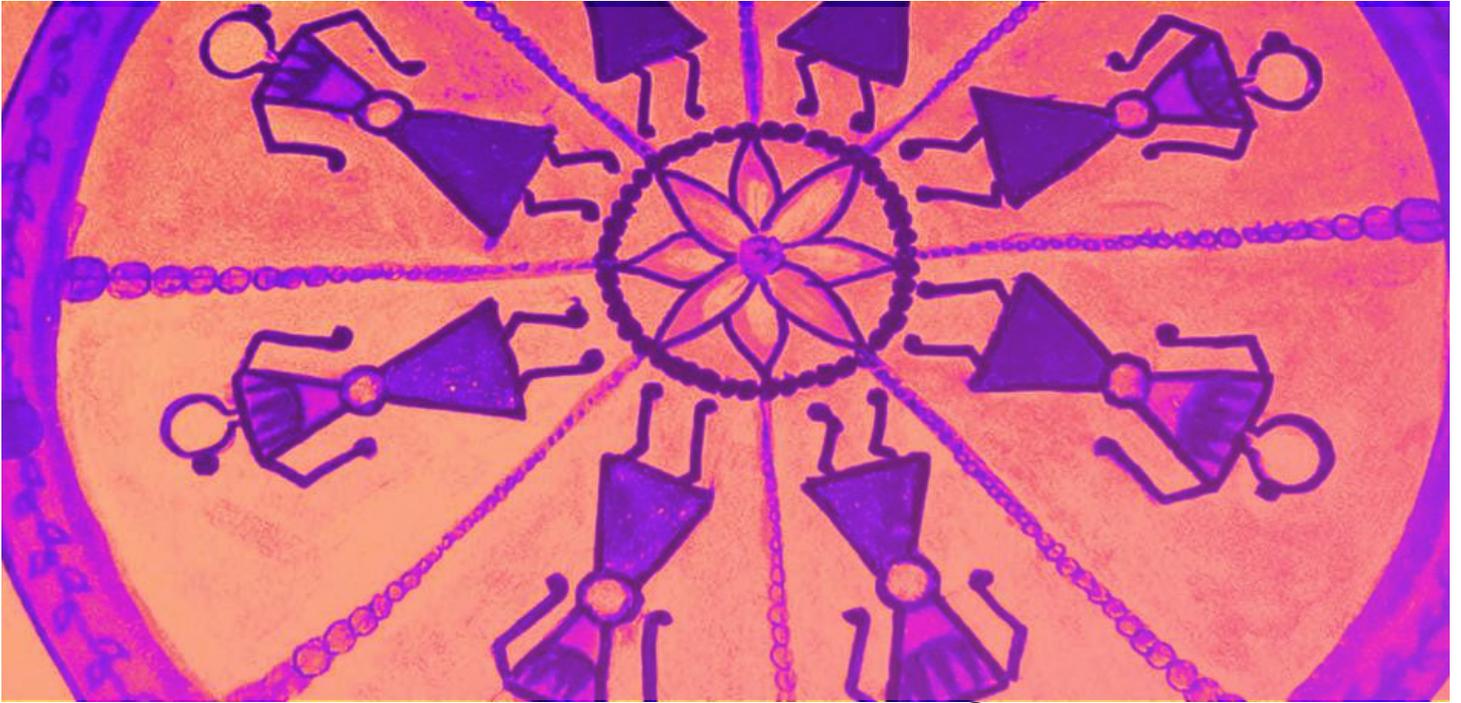
जिंदगी बाकी है... इंसानियत

पीड़ा का होना और पीड़ा में रह जाना,
यह दो बहुत अलग बातें हैं
मैं यह तो नहीं कहूँगी कि
तुम रोना मत, भटकना मत, हारना मत, टूटना मत !
मगर मैं यह जरूर कहूँगी कि
तुम उठना जरूर, फिर से चलना जरूर,
आगे बढ़ना जरूर,
क्योंकि तुम्हारा पीड़ा में रह जाना स्वीकार्य नहीं है
जब घनी रात के बाद भी सवेरा हुआ,
तो तुम क्यों अब भी अंधेरे में हो?
उठो, देखो आगे कितना उजाला है,
कितनी संभावनाएं हैं,
कितना जीवन है...

अमृता चौहान, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग

दिलों में दरारें
आत्मा पर बुराइयों का पहरा
इंसान में ना इंसानियत
यह सच है गहरा
जग के हर कोने में
दरिंदगी है छाई
न जाने कब नज़र आयेगी
इंसानों में इंसानियत की परछाई
अपराध न जाति देखता है
न देखता है उम्र का तकाज़ा
आज हैवानियत ने पार कर दी है
हर जुल्म की पराकाष्ठा

शिवानी कुमारी, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग



वक्त

घर से अलविदा लेते वक्त
माँ से अपनी बातें करते वक्त
पिता के संघर्ष से जुड़ते वक्त
जहन में उठते प्रश्नों के वक्त
एक ही जवाब मुझे मिलता हर वक्त
कि तू न हो परेशान जल्द ही आयेगा अपना वक्त

ममता कुमारी, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग

समझौता

नदियों का तो काम है बहना ,ठहर नहीं कहीं पाती हैं,
जाकर मिल उस सागर से अपनी पहचान मिटाती हैं
पर यह अंत नहीं उस गंगा का या सतलुज या जमुना का
बन बादल आकाश में उड़ घर वापस लौट आती हैं
गंगा हो तुम यमुना हो तुम और सतलुज भी हो तुम
रहो ना बस सागर का अंग अपनी पहचान बनाओ तुम
सागर का खारापन छोड़ो खुद की मिठास बढ़ाओ तुम
रहना ना उस सागर के संग जीवन वहां बिताना मत
समझौता कर दम घोट के जीवन व्यर्थ गँवाना मत।

कामिनी वामरे, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग

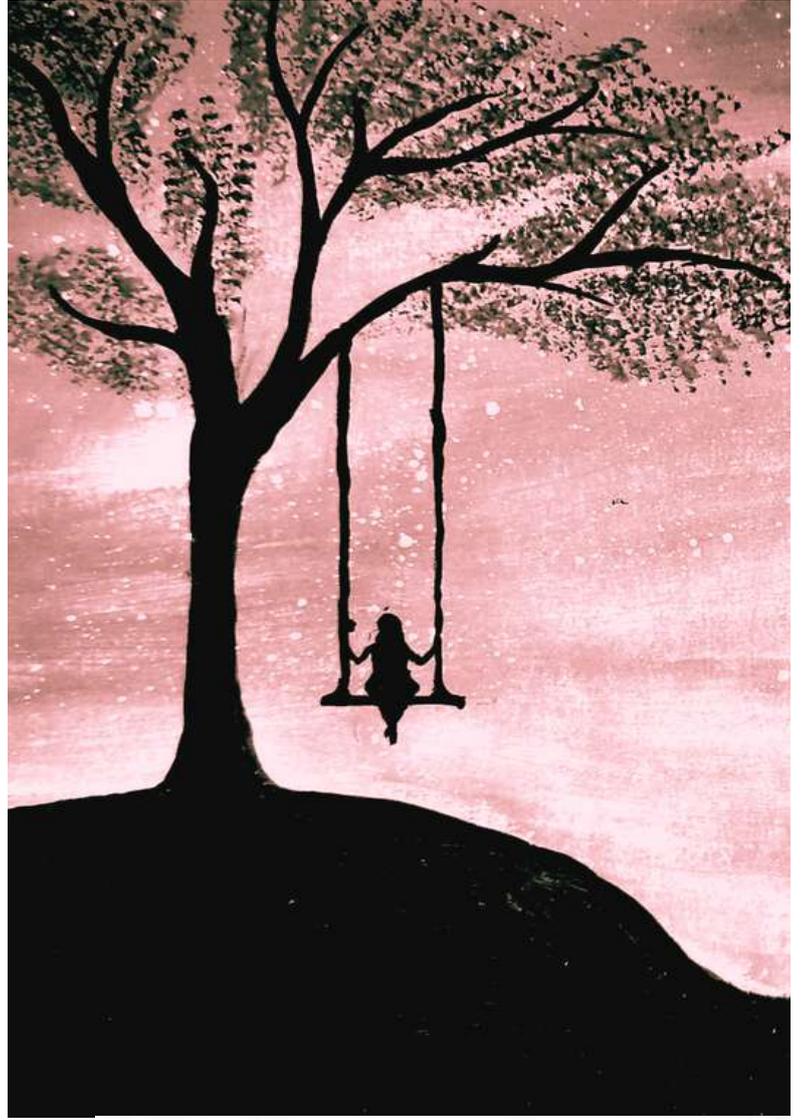
मैं कैसे स्वयं को पावन कर लूँ

कैसे मैं स्वयं को पावन कर लूँ
कैसे शुष्क नयनों में सागर भर दूँ
तू कहे तो मैं खुद को पत्थर कर दूँ
मैं कैसे स्वयं को पावन करूँ लूँ?

इस तन को गंगा में प्रवाहित कर दूँ
या स्वयं को अग्नि में समाहित कर दूँ
तन माटी को अर्पित कर दूँ
या इस अंत को समर्पित कर दूँ
मैं कैसे स्वयं को पावन कर लूँ?

इस तन को स्वयं से पृथक कर दूँ
या अपने अस्तित्व को मिथक कर दूँ
बोझिल तन को आहत कर दूँ
या पीड़ाओं को आदत कर दूँ
मैं कैसे स्वयं को पावन कर लूँ?

दारुण जीवन परित्यक्त कर दूँ
या द्रवित भावों को व्यक्त कर दूँ
कण कण में दावानल भर दूँ
रक्त रखूँ या इसे भी हलाहल कर दूँ
मैं कैसे स्वयं को पावन कर लूँ?



शिवानी कुमारी, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग

जिंदगी क्या है?

किसी के लिए भगवान का दिया सबसे सुंदर तोहफा
तो किसी के लिए फूलों भरा बगीचा
किसी के लिए जिंदगी गुलज़ार है
तो किसी के लिए काँटों भरा बाज़ार है
कोई खुशी से दिन रात बिताता है
अलग अलग मायने हैं जिंदगी के सबके जीवन में
कोई खुशी से दिन-रात बिताता
तो कोई हर बार मरने की ख्वाहिश जताता है
कभी पल भर में सफर सुहाना सा लगता है
तो कभी पल भर बाद बिखरा जहां सा लगता है।
कोई किसी का साथ चाहता है
तो कोई किसी का साथ छोड़ जाता है
जिंदगी के मायने सबके लिए अलग अलग हैं
जो इसको समझना चाहता है
वो खुद में उलझ सा जाता है।

कोमल साह , हिन्दी विभाग , तृतीय वर्ष



मूर्तिकार का संतोष

एक बार शाम का समय होता है। मोहन घर आकर पापा से कहता है कि "पापा जब मैं इतनी मेहनत से पढ़ता हूँ, कक्षा में मेरे अच्छे नंबर आते हैं किंतु आप कभी भी मेरी तारीफ क्यों नहीं करते, क्या आपको अच्छा नहीं लगता मेरा अक्ल आना??"

इस पर मोहन के पापा हँस दिए और कहा "बेटा मुझे तुम्हारे अच्छे नंबर व निरंतर प्रगति देखकर बेहद खुशी होती है, किंतु शायद तुम वह कलाकार वाली कहानी नहीं जानते?"

"कौन सी पापा?"

"तो सुनो..."

एक गांव में दो मूर्तिकार रहते थे दोनों ही बड़े होशियार थे, बहुत अच्छी-अच्छी मूर्तियां व तस्वीरें बनाते थे किंतु जो प्रथम मूर्तिकार था उसकी कला की तारीफ चारों ओर होती थी, जबकि दूसरे मूर्तिकार के साथ ऐसा नहीं था।

और मोहन धीरे-धीरे वह दूसरा मूर्तिकार प्रथम मूर्तिकार से कई गुना ज्यादा खूबसूरत व मोहक मूर्तियां बनाने लगता है, तुम्हें पता है मोहन प्रथम मूर्तिकार की उन्नति अथवा प्रगति उसी दिन रुक गई थी जब उसने आत्म गौरव व संतोष आ गया था, उसे लगने लगा कि जब सब उसकी कला की इतनी तारीफ करते हैं इसका मतलब वह ही श्रेष्ठ है उसे और सुधार की आवश्यकता ही नहीं है।

किंतु दूसरे मूर्तिकार ने सदैव स्वयं को कमतर आंक कर स्वयं में सुधार का निरंतर प्रयास किया और वह श्रेष्ठों में भी श्रेष्ठ सर्वश्रेष्ठ मूर्तिकार बन जाता है।

बेटा उम्मीद है कि तुम मेरी बात की गहराई समझ गए होंगे।"

"जी पापा मैं भी वह दूसरा मूर्तिकार बनूँगा"

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प्रकृति की

पीड़ा एवं अभिलाषा

एक बार जंगल में पेड़ को कराहते हुए सुनकर चिड़िया ने उसे पूछा "क्या हुआ बड़े भैया आप आज परेशान लग रहे हैं!"

तो पेड़ ने उसे बताया "क्या बताऊं तुम्हें छोटी आज हम स्वयं के घर में ही सुरक्षित नहीं हैं हमने मानव को इतने संसाधन अपनी कोख से निकाल कर दिए, इतनी धरती दी, समस्त सुख सुविधा दी किंतु....!"

चिड़िया-" किंतु क्या बड़े भैया?"

पेड़-" किंतु छोटी वह हमारे (प्रकृति) अंश मात्र को नहीं रहने दे रहे, धरती की सतह को ही नहीं अपितु आंतरिक भाग और आकाश को भी इन्होंने प्रदूषित कर दिया। आज जब मैं नदियों से पानी सोखता हूँ तो मुझे जल ना मिलकर जहरीले पदार्थ को पीना पड़ रहा है, पूरा दिन मेरे चारों ओर कालिक जमी रहती है, मेरे शरीर के आधे हिस्सों को वे लोग काट कर ले गए।"

चिड़िया-" अब क्या होगा बड़े भैया?"

पेड़-" छोटी अगर मानव का व्यवहार इसी प्रकार रहा तो संसार और हमारा अंत निकट है।"

चिड़िया-" बड़े भैया लगता तो मुझे भी ऐसा ही है कि मनुष्यों ने मेरे भी सारे संसाधनों को समाप्त कर खुद का बना लिया है। अब मुझे अपना घर बनाने को जगह नहीं मिलती, न खाने के लिए कुछ रहा है धरती पर और ना ही हमारे संरक्षण के लिए।"

पेड़-" मैं तो प्रत्येक प्राणी से यही प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि हमारे अस्तित्व को बचाने की इस जंग में हमारा साथ दे और धरती को बचा ले।"

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डर

डर भी कितनी अजीब चीज है ना
डर हार जाने का डर ना जीत पाने का
डर है दर्द में अपनी सिसकी को छुपा ना पाने का
डर है अगर-मगर या मगर- अगर में रह जाने का
डर एक छोटा सा किस्सा बन जाने का
डर अपनी कहानी को रोमांचक ना बना पाने का
डर टूट जाने का डर फिर कभी ना जुड़ पाने का
डर कहीं पीछे छूट जाने का
डर है दुनियां से कदम से कदम ना मिला पाने का
डर खामोशी का
डर एक सांस में सब कुछ बोल देने का
डर खुद को खो देने का
डर खुद को ना पहचान पाने का
डर ख्वाब ना पूरा कर पाने का
डर उस ख्वाब के लिए किसी से ना लड़ पाने का
यूं तो मन है उन फूलों सा खिलखिलाने का
पर डर है अगले ही पल उस टहनी से टूट जाने का
यूं तो मन है उन नदियों सा बह जाने का
लेकिन डर है कहीं किनारा ना पाने का
डर है उस अंबर को ना छू पाने का
डर है उस पंछी सा पिंजरे में रह जाने का
डर गिर जाने का
और फिर कभी ना उठ पाने का
डर अपनों को खो देने का
डर है जिसे पसंद करो उसे ना बोल पाने का
डर समय के बीत जाने का
डर समय पर ना पहुंच पाने का
डर कुछ खास लम्हों के बीत जाने का

और इस डर से उस लम्हें को ना जी पाने का
डर इस समाज का
डर अपनी ख्वाहिशों को पूरा ना कर पाने का
डर है किसी इंसान को सही होते हुए भी गलत बताने का
डर है उसके गलत होने के बावजूद सही बताने का
डर है किसी के झूठ को ना समझ पाने का
अपने आप को दुख पहुंचाने का
डर अपनी डगर से भटक जाने का
डर उस एक गलती को कभी ना सुधार पाने का
डर सांसों के रुक जाने का
डर अपनी ख्वाहिश अधूरा छोड़ जाने का
डर हिम्मत टूट जाने का
और फिर कभी ना जूटा पाने का
डर झांसी की रानी सा ना बन पाने का
डर उस अबला नारी सा रह जाने का
डर अकेले रह जाने का
डर जैसी जिंदगी चाहि वैसी ना जी पाने का
डर दुनिया की पहेलियों में उलझ जाने का
और फिर उसे कभी ना सुलझा पाने का
डर मलाल रह जाने का
डर जो सच में चाहो उस बात को ना बता पाने का
डर अपनी कहानी यूं ही अधूरी छोड़ जाने का
डर उस कहानी को पूरा ना लिख पाने का
डर और सबसे बड़ा डर
इतने डरों के यूं ही रह जाने का ।।



श्रेया शुक्ला, द्वितीय वर्ष , हिन्दी विभाग

मेरी प्यारी माँ

वह ईश्वर की अनमोल रचना है
और हमें खुश देखना ही उनका एकमात्र सपना है
ईश्वर का अनूठा चमत्कार है माँ
केवल एक शब्द नहीं जीवन का सार है माँ

मकान को घर बनाती है माँ
और उस घर का आधार बन जाती है माँ
भूखी रहकर भी अपने हिस्से से खिला देती है माँ
और नींद ना आने पर थपकी देकर सुला देती है माँ
मेरी खुशियों के लिए वह सबसे लड़ जाती है
और मेरे चेहरे की प्यारी मुस्कान बन जाती है
गलती करने पर डांट भी लगाती है
और फिर रूठ जाने पर तुरंत मना लेती है
मेरे अब्बल होने पर सबसे खुश हो जाती हैं
और हमेशा मेरा आत्मविश्वास बढ़ाती जाती हैं.

कभी माँ बनकर प्यार लुटाती है तो,
कभी पत्नी बनकर पापा का साथ निभाती है
कभी बहू बनकर ससुराल का मान बढ़ाती है
तो, कभी बेटी बनकर मायके की रौनक बन जाती है
वह केवल माँ ही है,
जो एक साथ कई किरदार निभाती है।
उंगली पड़कर उन्होंने चलना सिखाया,
इस जीवन का वास्तविक अर्थ भी समझाया,
हमारे बीमार होने पर अपनी नींद को गंवाया
हमें बड़ा करने में उन्होंने अपने आप को तपाया
वह केवल माँ है,
जिन्होंने पूरे परिवार के लिए अपने आप को भुला दिया.
उनकी चूड़ियों की खनक और पायल की झंकार,
उनके टिके की चमक और चेहरे का दीदार
उनकी आंचल की छाया और थपकियों में छिपा प्यार
उनकी प्यारी सी हंसी घर को बनाती है गुलजार,
मेरे सपने को उन्होंने अपना माना है
और उन्हें हकीकत मुझे ही बनाना है.
क्योंकि
उनको खुश देखना ही मेरा सपना है
और मुझे वो सपना पूरा कर दिखाना है।

तुलसी कुमारी, तृतीय वर्ष, तृतीय विभाग

माँ

जब जब दुख का प्रलय आया
तब तब बस तूने ही अपना हाथ बढ़ाया
माना मैं बात बात पर लड़ जाती हूँ
पर तेरे स्नेह भरे आंचल से पल भर में तर जाती हूँ
अपनी साड़ी की गाँठ में पांच दस तू बचा लेती थी
मांगने पर भी तू कभी कभी न देती थी
मैं कोने में जाकर तुझे कोसा करती
रोया करती, बिना खाए सो जाया करती
तू बीच रात में बाबू बोल जगाया करती
तुझे लगता है मैं भूल गई वो सारी रातें
पर मां मुझे याद है तेरी वो सब बातें
तेरी वो पीड़ा, तेरे नयनों से बहने वाली धारा
तू बस सब्र कर, धीरज रख
एक दिन जरूर खत्म होगा -
ये अस्थिर संसार हमारा
सुख का इंतज़ार हमारा !

ममता कुमारी, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग



इस जहां के परे

उस आसमान के परे वो ऐसा जहां ढूंढूं,
जहां सुकून मिले जो मैं आंखें मूंदूं,
जहां कल की कोई परवाह न हो,
जहां बस मैं बेपरवाह हूं,
न उम्मीदें ना उनका गम हो,
जहां बस सुकून हो चाहे खुशियां कम हों,
जहां दुनिया की सारी जिम्मेदारियों से कुछ पल को राहत हो,
जहां बस अपने लिए जीने की चाहत हो,
जहां ये न सोचूं कि लोग क्या कहेंगे,
जहां शर्मसार न हूं अगर आंसू बहेंगे,
जहां टूटी उम्मीदों की आवाज़ तो हो मगर कोई सुन न सके,
जहां अगर आंसू भी बहाऊं तो कोई देख ना सके,
जहां मैं, मेरे आंसू और खामोशी हो,
जहां बस मैं बेपरवाह हूं चाहे कुछ भी हो,
जहां अगले पन्ने पर जाने की हड़बड़ी न हो,
बस सुकून की ज़िन्दगी हो कोई गड़बड़ी न हो।
दौड़ती दुनिया की बजाय मुस्कुराऊं बीते लम्हों को देखकर,
असलियत महसूस करूं कुछ पलों को ठहर कर,
कैसे समझाऊं लोगों को कि सफ़र में सुकून भी ज़रूरी है
कई बार आंसू खामोशी से ज्यादा ज़रूरी हैं,
क्या कहूं उन्हें जो गुम हैं कामयाबी की दौड़ में?
और क्या कहूं उन्हें जो खुद गुम हैं जज़्बातों के दौर में?
इसीलिए तो चाहती हूं,
उस आसमान के परे वो ऐसा जहां ढूंढूं,

नुपुर सैनी, द्वितीय वर्ष, अंग्रेजी विभाग

फूल

मुझे फूल इतने पसंद क्यों हैं?
मुझे नहीं पता.....
शायद इसलिए क्योंकि मैं चाहती हूँ,
कि मुझे हर रंग, रूप और आकार में प्यार किया जाए,
बिल्कुल फूलों की तरह....
शायद इसलिए क्योंकि मैं चाहती हूँ कि
मैं हर दिन और मज़बूत और बेहतर खिलूँ,
चाहे कल कुछ भी हुआ हो....
शायद इसलिए क्योंकि मैं चाहती हूँ कि हर कोई मुझे उनके
सुख दुख के पलों में याद रखे,

बिल्कुल फूलों की तरह
शायद इसलिए क्योंकि मैं हर परिस्थिति का उसी तरह से
सामना करना चाहती हूँ जिस तरह फूल अलग-अलग
मौसमों का सामना करते हैं.....
शायद इसलिए क्योंकि मैं चाहती हूँ कि लोग मुझे प्रेम के
चिन्ह के रूप में याद करें और हमेशा अपने दिलों के
करीब रखे जैसे लोग अपनी किताबों में गुलाब रखते हैं।

बीना कुमारी, तृतीय वर्ष, पत्रकारिता विभाग

गणित कभी मेरा **हमसफ़र** नहीं रहा..

गणित कभी मेरा हमसफ़र नहीं रहा,

बल्कि एक बोझ था।

न इसकी गिरहें मेरे खयालात से खुलती थीं,

न इसकी लकीरों मेरे एहसासात से मिलती थीं।

ये उन ज़हन वालों का मंसूबा था, जो सटीक हिसाब में राहत पाते हैं, मगर मेरे जैसा कोई, जो अल्फ़ाज़ की लय में बहता हो, वो इस बेजान सलीब को कैसे उठाए? मेरी धड़कनों की खानी से यह कभी मेल नहीं खा सका, शायद मेरा विरोध इसकी यांत्रिकता से था, इसकी कठोर लकीरों से, जो जज़्बातों की नरमी को नहीं समझतीं, इसके उन नियमों से, जो इंसानी सोच की बेकरारी से बेखबर हैं।

अंक अपनी तयशुदा हदों में कैद रहते हैं, न यह किसी जुदाई के दर्द में तड़पते हैं, न किसी आरजू की आँच में सुलगते हैं, न किसी भूली-बिसरी याद की ठंडक से कांपते हैं। गणित को बस एक जवाब चाहिए, एक हल, एक समीकरण, एक निश्चित नतीजा। मगर मुझे जवाब नहीं, कहानियाँ चाहिए। मैं यह नहीं जानना चाहती कि X का हल क्या है, बल्कि यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि वो किस मोड़ पर ठहर गया, किन ख्वाबों से महरूम रह गया, किस दर्द को अपने सीने में दबाए बैठा है। Y का मूल्य गणित के लिए अहम है, मगर मेरे लिए यह जानना ज़रूरी है कि वो किस ख़ामोशी में खो गया, उसकी जुदाई ने दुनिया को क्या मायने दिए?

गणित की यह नपी-तुली दुनिया मुझे उस बाज़ार जैसी लगती है जहाँ हर एहसास को तोला जाता है, हर लम्हे का हिसाब माँगा जाता है। मगर मैं अंकों के लिए नहीं जीती, मैं उन एहसासों के लिए जीती हूँ जो किसी तराजू में नहीं समाते, उस मुहब्बत के लिए जो किसी समीकरण में नहीं ढलती, उन खयालों के लिए जो तर्क और नियमों से परे बहते हैं। मेरी दुनिया शायरी की है, उन लफ़्ज़ों की, जो दिलों में हलचल मचाते हैं, जो आँसू बनकर बहते हैं, जो किसी अधूरी दुआ की तरह फिज़ाओं में घुल जाते हैं। कुछ सवाल ऐसे होते हैं जिनके जवाब नहीं होते, मगर उन्हें जीना पड़ता है। अगर ज़िंदगी को महज़ गणित बना दिया जाए, एक जोड़-घटाव, एक आँकड़ा, एक प्रतिशत तो उसकी रूह ही छिन जाएगी।

तो मैं गणित को उसके दायरों में रहने देती हूँ किताबों में, दफ़्तरों में, हिसाब-किताब की दुनिया में। और मैं चुनती हूँ उसे जो बेहिसाब है, जो बेपनाह है, जो बेमिसाल है, जो सिर्फ़ महसूस किया जाता है, मगर कभी पूरा समझा नहीं जा सकता।

आशिमा रियाज़ अली , तृतीय वर्ष , राजनीति विज्ञान विभाग

अल्फ़ाज़...

क्या होते हैं अल्फ़ाज़?

मिलकर जुमला बना दें मुकम्मल नहीं तो अधूरे।

कहानी बन गए तो सुने जाएंगे नहीं तो तवज्जो को तरस जाएंगे, समझ लिए गए हो तो मतलब है, नहीं तो बेमतलब कह दिए जाएंगे कभी इज़हार करते हैं, तो कभी इनकार,

सुकून भरे दिल को बेतहाशा उलझा जाते हैं।

कभी दर्द देने के काम आते हैं, कभी बहलाने फुसलाने के,

ये अल्फ़ाज़ भी क्या चीज़ है!!!

जिस लहजे में बोले जाएं बस उसी एहसास का रंग अपना लेते हैं।

कभी दोहराए जाने पर गुस्सा दिला देते हैं,

तो कभी उसी बात को फिर सुनने से तसल्ली।

अगर कुछ लोग बोले तो सही लगते हैं,

फिर चाहे सारी दुनिया का सही कुछ और हो।

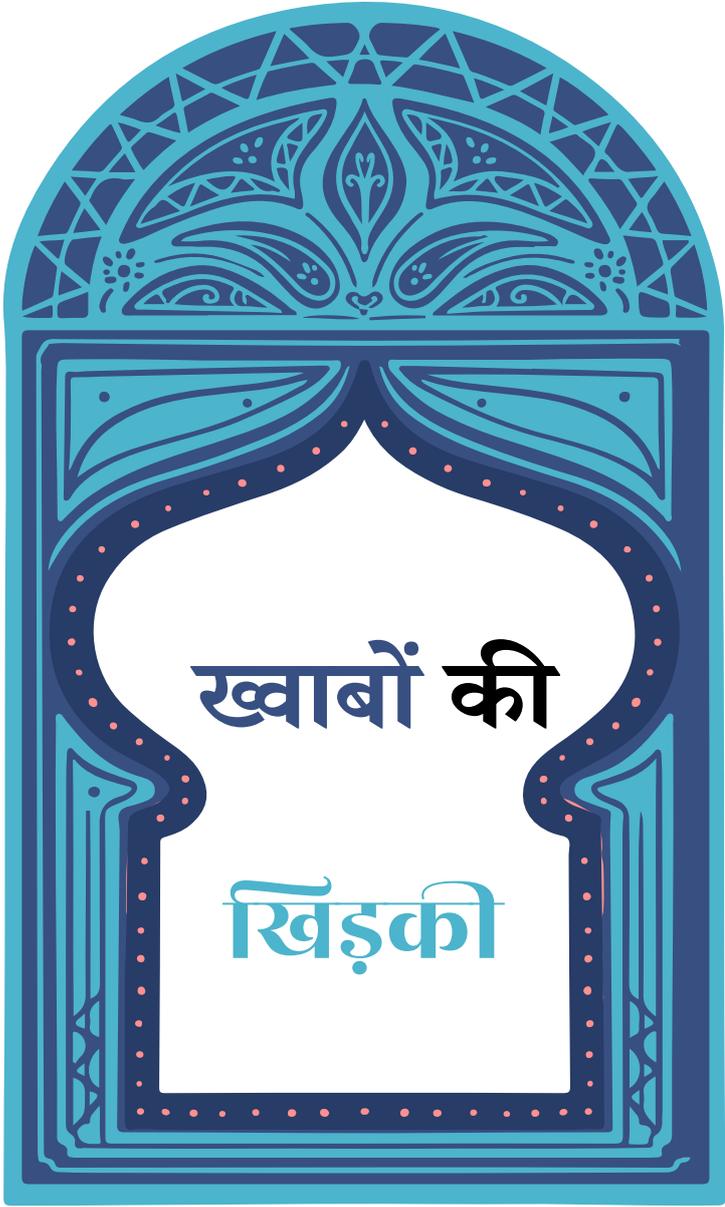
मुकम्मल समझें जाए तो अधूरे भी मुकम्मल लगते हैं,

नहीं तो मुकम्मल कहानियों में भी दिल चाहता है

कि सुनने को कुछ और अल्फ़ाज़ बाकी हों |

जहां सुकून मिले जो मैं आंखें मूंदू,
ना किसी से कुछ पाने की चाहत हो,
एक गहरी सांस के साथ बस राहत हो,
जहां मेरी खामोशी से कोई खफ़ा ना हो,
जहां कोई धोखा कोई ज़फ़ा ना हो,
जहां जीने की आरजू ज़रूरी ना हो,
जहां मौत के लिए कोई मजबूरी ना हो,
और भी कई ख्वाहिशें हैं मेरी इस आरजू से ,
कहीं ना कहीं आप भी वाकिफ हैं उस जहां से,
जरा आँखें मूंद गौर फरमाएंगे,
तो शायद उस जहां को अपने सामने पाएंगे,
मगर कुछ भी हो इस जहां में, मेरी तो बस एक चाहत है
कि उस आसमान के परे वो ऐसा जहां ढूंढू,
जहां सुकून मिले जो मैं आंखें मूंदू,
जहां सुकून मिले जो मैं आंखें मूंदू!

नुपुर सैनी, द्वितीय वर्ष , अंग्रेजी विभाग



ख्वाबों की खिड़की

चिड़िया पूछ रही थी, "तुम्हारे ख्वाब कैसे होते हैं?"
इन सबकी व्याकुलता को मैं समझ रही थी,
पर मेरी नजरें तो एकटक, मेरे सपनों पर टिकी थीं।
मेरे ख्वाबों पर...
ख्वाबों में खुशियों थीं, नादानी थी, बेखयाली थी, मोहब्बत थी,
कदम-कदम पर गम और चुनौतियों भी थीं,
पर सबसे बढ़कर उनमें मेरे होने की झलक थी।
उनमें मैं थी।
ख्वाबों ने कहा,
"इस खिड़की से बाहर आसमान में आने के लिए
जरा वक़्त लगेगा
इतने दिनों से वह बंद जो पड़ी थी
हमारी अहमियत का एहसास होना ज़रूरी है
हमारे बिना, तुम मन में झाँक कर देखो, तुम अधूरी हो।"
ख्वाबों ने कहा और सूरज, बादल, पंछी ने हाँ में हाँ मिलाई
वो भी मुझे जानते थे !!!
असमंजस में थी-
खुद को पहचानती नहीं या पहचानना चाहती नहीं?
खैर, अब मेरी ख्वाबों की खिड़की खुल गई थी,
और ख्वाब आज़ाद थे
शुक्र है खुदा का,
जल्दी ही मान गए,
अब वो मेरे साथ थे।

आरजू , द्वितीय वर्ष, राजनीति विज्ञान

बड़े दिन हो गए थे उस एक खिड़की को खोले हुए,
आज जब कितने ही दिनों बाद
शाम का आसमान, ढलता सूरज और लौटते पंछी
साथ बैठे तो ,
उस खिड़की का खुलना लाजमी था।
इन सब कुदरती करिश्मों ने हिम्मत दी
मुझे अपने आप को खोजने की
शायद कल के मायूस अँधेरे जो मेरे आँसुओं के साथी थे,
उनकी आपस में जो गुफ्तगू हुई थी
जो भी हो, आज ये सब मेरे साथ थे,
बड़े मेहरबान थे।
तो हमने खिड़की खोली,
खिड़की ख्वाबों की थी,
जो मुझे अज़ीज़ थे
पर धीरे-धीरे उन पर, धूल का बारीक धुंधलापन जमने लगा
जैसे अलमारी में रखी और कई दिनों से न टटोली गई
किताबों पर होता है।
मैंने धूल झाड़ दी,
ढलते सूरज की रौशनी ने उन्हें जगमगा दिया
मानो बादल मेरे ख्वाबों की खिड़की के खुलने
का पैगाम ले जाने को तैयार हों।

बातों का जोर

अकसर हम बातें करते हैं
कभी थोड़ी तो कभी ज्यादा करते हैं
खुद से, अपनों से, गैरों से करते हैं
हँसी खुशी, गम दुःख का ज़िक्र करते हैं
फिर उन्हीं बातों को याद करते हैं
कुछ पर अफ़सोस और
कुछ पर दिल खोल कर हँसते हैं
यहीं बातें मायूस भी किया करती हैं
फिर हमें संभाला भी करती हैं
हर मोड़ पर लोग मिलते हैं
वे बदलते हैं पर साथ रहती हैं उनकी बातें
हाँ हम बातें करते हैं लोगों को याद करते हैं।

चंचल , तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग

इश्क़-ओ-इंकलाब

इश्क़, जो सरचश्मा-ए-नूर है, जो लफ़्ज़ नायाब है,
जिसकी लौ से शमा चमकें, जो सबसे आला मुकाम है।
मगर यही इश्क़ जब दुनिया की चौखट पे सर उठाता है,
कभी मज़हब से, कभी तहज़ीब से, कभी कानून से टकराता है।
इश्क़ अब महज़ एक जज्बा नहीं, इक सौदा-ए-नामुराद है,
जहाँ बाज़ारों की शर्तें हैं, और दुनिया का सख्त पहरा है,
मज़हब की बंदिशें कहती हैं,
हिस्सों में बंटा करो, जात-पात की जंजीरें कहती हैं,
अपनी औकात में रहा करो।
तहज़ीब का तक्राज़ा है, इश्क़ में अदब रखो,
मर्द की इजाज़त लो, औरत की हद रखो।
कभी भगत के नक्शों पे, कभी मीरा के रागों में,
इश्क़ ने ही तलवार उठाई थी,
इश्क़ ही था बगावत के बाज़ारों में।
दरबारों ने ठुकराया, किताबों ने जलाया,
मगर इश्क़ हर बार राख से ज़िंदा होकर आया।
इश्क़ जब भी होगा, बगावत करेगा,
हुकूमतों से, मजहबों से, दस्तूरों से लड़ेगा।
इश्क़ जब भी होगा, खुदा की सबसे बड़ी इबादत होगा,
इश्क़ जब भी होगा, सियासतों की सबसे बड़ी शिकस्त होगा।
तो बताओ, किस-किस इश्क़ पर पहरा लगाओगे?
कितनी दास्तानों को खाक में मिलाओगे?
कितनी मोहब्बतों को दफ़नाओगे?
क्योंकि इश्क़ जब भी सूली चढ़ता है,
हर बार नई रूह में, नए नाम से लौट आता है।
आज किसी अदालत के कटघरे में खड़ा है,
और हुक्म हुआ है-इश्क़ इबादत नहीं, गुनाह है।
वही इश्क़
जो मीर की सिसकियों में सुलगा,
जो अमृता की चिट्ठियों में भीगा,
जो देवदास के होठों पर "पारो" बनकर काँपा,
जो दिलवाले दुल्हनिया ले जाएंगे में
सरसों के खेतों में महका,
जो कुछ कुछ होता है में "प्यार दोस्ती है"
कहकर हर हद पार कर गया,
जो मोहब्बतों में बगावत बनकर
गुरुकुल के सख्त दरवाज़ों को तोड़ आया,
जो बागबान में सालों की जुदाई के बाद भी
एक खत के सहारे ज़िंदा रहा,
जो ओम शांति ओम में एक जन्म के बाद भी
अगले जन्म तक जलता रहा,
जो मुग़ल-ए-आज़म में "प्यार किया तो डरना क्या"
बनकर सलीम-अनारकली की जुबां पर चढ़ा,
जो सूरज हुआ मद्धम की उदासी में ठहरा,
जो कल हो ना हो की घड़ी में सिमटा,
वही इश्क़,
जो मदीने की गलियों से बनारस की गंगा तक बहा,
जो अजमेर की ख्वाजा की चौखट पर सज्दा था,

जो काशी के मसानों में दीपक बन जलता था,
जो अयोध्या के राम में था, अली के कलाम में था,
जो नर्मदा की लहरों में गज़ल बन बहा,
जो फतेहपुर के क़िले में दुआ बन ढला।
जो कबीर के दोहों में छलका,
अमीर खुसरो के तरानों में महका,
फिर भी,
आज किसी अदालत में खड़ा है,
और हुक्म हुआ है।
इश्क़ इबादत नहीं, गुनाह है।
मगर सुनो! अब ये कैद-ओ-सज़ा मंजूर नहीं,
इश्क़ की रहगुज़र में कोई हद-ओ-हसरत मंजूर नहीं।
इश्क़ न झुकता है, न बिखरता है, न ठहरता है,
इश्क़ अलाव बन धधकता,
गुल बन महकता है।
हर दिल की खानी है, हर लफ़्ज़ की कहानी है,
हर बंदिश से परे, हर जंजीर से अंजान है।
इश्क़ अमर है, आज़ाद है, इंक़लाब का ऐलान है।

आशिमा रियाज़ अली , तृतीय वर्ष , राजनीति विज्ञान विभाग

इश्क़-ए-रूहानियत

जो दिल को दीवाना कर दे, वो सूफियाना है,
जहां सूफियों की महफिल सजती है,
वहां खुदा की रहमत बरसती है,
शान-ओ-शौकत के रंग फीके पड़ जाते है,
जब फ़कीरों के जबान पर पीर ठहरते है,
हर लफ़्ज़ इश्क की तासीर बन जाता हैं
जब महबूब का नूर वो रूहानियत बिखेरता है।

फूलों की डालियां महक उठती है,
जब खुसरो के नगमे, इश्क का आलम करते है
चांद, फलक के दरमियान, मुस्कुराता है,
जब वह करीम का दीदार करता है,
मोहब्बत से बंध जाती है हर दुआ,
जब परवाना शमा में रजामंद हो जाता है,
बहार बरकतों से हर मंजर रोशन हो उठता है,
जब खुसरो और हजरत में फर्क नहीं रह जाता,
जहां इश्क, इबादत का अक्स बन जाता है,
और जहां आशिक़ और माशूक़ एक हो जाते है।

मेघा रानी , तृतीय वर्ष, मनोविज्ञान विभाग

दूसरी प्रतीक व्यवस्था हमें ऋचा के डांस के रूप में देखने को मिलती है। शादी से पहले का उसका किया डांस उसके लिए स्वतंत्रता और आत्म अभिव्यक्ति का ज़रिया था, लेकिन शादी के बाद वह अपने सपनों या कहीं खुद के अस्तित्व से ही दूर हो जाती है।

लेकिन नृत्य जो कभी उसके जीवन का अंग था आज महज त्याज्य प्रतिभा बनकर रह जाती है | जब उसकी चेतना जागृत होती है, तब वह दोबारा से डांस करना शुरू करती है और यह उसके भीतर आ रहे आत्मबोध और स्वतंत्रता की ओर बढ़ते उसके कदमों का प्रतीक बन जाता है।

फिल्म के अंतिम प्रसंग में घर की खुली खिड़की प्रतीक बनती है, ऋचा की आज़ादी का यानि ऋचा जैसी अनेक महिलाओं की पहचान, उनके अस्तित्व का और एक नए जीवन की ओर बढ़ते उनके सबल कदमों का। ऋचा का खिड़की खोलना और ताजी हवा को महसूस करना , अभिव्यक्त करता है उसके जीवन में नए बदलाव और बंदिशों से मुक्त होने के प्रतीक को ।

मिसेज फिल्म में ऋचा का आत्मबोध और विद्रोह एक धीमी प्रक्रिया के रूप में सामने आता है। जैसे जैसे समय बीतता है उसे महसूस होने लगता है कि उसकी अपनी पहचान कहीं पीछे खो रही है। उसने देखा है खुद उसकी सास एक पढ़ी-लिखी, आत्मनिर्भर महिला थीं, लेकिन शादी के बाद उन्होंने अपने सपनों को परिवार के लिए त्याग दिया । इससे ऋचा तो यह समझ गई है कि अगर उसने अपने सपनों को छोड़ दिया, तो वह भी इसी चक्र का हिस्सा बनकर एक सामान्य ज़िंदगी जीने के लिये विवश हो जाएगी। यह दृश्य एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रतीकात्मक मोड़ है, जहाँ ऋचा अपनी स्थिति को समझने लगती है और महसूस करती है कि अगर उसने अभी कदम नहीं उठाया, तो वह भी उसी पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्था में बंध जाएगी जिससे निकलना नामुमकिन हो जाएगा। यह आत्मबोध उसे धीरे-धीरे विद्रोह की ओर धकेलता है।

ऋचा विद्रोह स्वरूप छोटे छोटे कदम उठती है। उसका यह विद्रोह परिवर्तन की आशा रखता है । वह मासिक धर्म से जुड़े नियमों पर सवाल उठाती है, रसोई में लीक करते पाइप को ठीक कराने की जिद करती है, और अपनी यौन इच्छाओं को स्पष्ट रूप से व्यक्त करती है। उसका ऐसा करना दिवाकर को अजीब लगने लगता है, दिवाकर की ऐसी प्रतिक्रिया देखकर ऋचा और अधिक मुखर हो जाती है। उसका डांस फिर से शुरू करना भी विद्रोह का एक रूप है —यह उसकी दबी हुई इच्छाओं और स्वतंत्रता की तलाश का प्रतीक बन जाता है।

फिल्म के अंतिम हिस्से में ऋचा का विद्रोह परिवर्तित परिदृश्य को प्रदर्शित करता है। अब वह समझ चुकी है कि बदलाव के लिए उसे खुद ही कदम उठाने हैं। मात्र हाथ पर हाथ धरे बैठना और परिस्थितियों से समझौता करना बिल्कुल ठीक नहीं है।

इससे स्थिति और अधिक गंभीर और जटिल हो जाएगी । अंतिम दृश्य में जब वह खिड़की खोलती है, यह क्रिया उसकी मुक्ति और नए जीवन, नई आशा की ओर बढ़ते उसके कदम को ओर संकेत करती है । अतः अब यह स्पष्ट है कि उसने खुद को सिर्फ एक 'मिसेज' बनने से बचा लिया और साथ ही साथ अपनी पहचान को फिर से प्राप्त कर लिया है।

ऋचा का यह आत्मबोध और विद्रोह फिल्म का सबसे मजबूत पक्ष है। यह सिर्फ एक व्यक्तिगत संघर्ष नहीं, बल्कि हर उस महिला की कहानी है जो पितृसत्ता के जकड़न से बाहर निकलकर अपने लिए खड़े होने का साहस जुटा पाती है। फिल्म का एकमात्र संदेश यही है—महिलाओं को अपनी इच्छाओं और अस्तित्व के लिए खुद ही आवाज़ उठानी होगी, क्योंकि समाज से स्वीकृति की उम्मीद करना उन्हें और उनके अस्तित्व को सीमित करने जैसा है।

फिल्म का निर्माण पक्ष-

अभिनेत्री के तौर पर सान्या मल्होत्रा ने ऋचा के किरदार को बखूबी निभाया है, उनकी भावनात्मक यात्रा की संवेदनशील प्रस्तुति इसकी परिचायक है। निशांत दहिया और कंवलजीत सिंह ने भी अपने किरदारों के माध्यम से पितृसत्तात्मक सोच को प्रभावी ढंग से दर्शाया है। निर्देशक आरती कदव ने सूक्ष्म विवरणों के माध्यम से कहानी में जीवंतता डाल दी है, जिससे दर्शक ऋचा की यात्रा से जुड़ाव महसूस कर कहीं न कहीं खुद को किरदार में परिकल्पित करने लगते हैं।

उपसंहार : 'मिसेज' फिल्म आज के समय में अपनी प्रासंगिकता को लेकर और अधिक महत्वपूर्ण हो जाती है । यह एक क्रांतिकारी फिल्म है जो पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति को लेकर सवाल ही नहीं उठाती बल्कि समाज और ऐसी निम्न सोच रखने वाले लोगों पर गहरा व्यंग भी करती है। यह उनके अस्तित्व और दोहरे स्वभाव पर प्रश्नचिह्न भी लगती है। यह एक ऐसी फिल्म है जो दर्शकों को आत्ममंथन करने पर मजबूर करती है और समाज में व्याप्त लैंगिक असमानताओं को उजागर करती है। फिल्म की कहानी, अभिनय और निर्देशन सभी मिलकर इसे एक उत्कृष्ट अनुभव बनाते हैं।

शिवांशी शुक्ला, तृतीय वर्ष, हिन्दी विभाग





मेरी दास्तान

आकाश को चूमती पर्वत श्रृंखलाएं उनके पार से आती
 ऋल कल करती श्वेत जलधारा, झरने का रूप लिए प्रवाहमान
 पूर्ण प्रवाहमान निरंतर प्रवाहमान हो जाना चाहता है
 मेरा मन भी प्रवाहमान झरने-सा
 कैंतु कुछ प्रश्नों के कारण आती हैं अड़चन
 पह प्रश्न ही
 मेरी तकलीफ, मेरा दर्द है कि
 मैं कौन हूँ ? मैं क्या हूँ? जैसी भी हूँ, क्यों हूँ ?
 जीवन के सफर में ना जाने क्यों एक पल में सब अपने लगते हैं,
 और अगले ही पल में सब बेगाने, समझ नहीं आता अपनी दास्तां
 कैसे बयां करूं, इसके साथ कुछ और भी सवाल है मन में
 पर ना जाने क्यों उन सवालोंने तक नहीं पहुंच पा रही
 शायद कुछ अव्यक्त सवाल
 शायद कुछ अव्यक्त भाव
 शायद अस्मिता का सवाल
 उलझ सी गई हूँ स्वयं में लगता है अकेली हो गई हूँ
 इस जहाँ में पहली बार एहसास हो रहा है
 इस बात का कि भीड़ में होकर भी तन्हा सी रह गई हूँ

क्या दास्तान सुनाऊँ स्वयं में उलझ सी गई हूँ
 अव्यक्त दर्द, घुटन, सिसकियों से भरी जिंदगी हो गई मेरी
 खुद को समझने की कोशिश में बस
 इतना ही समझ पाई नहीं रहा प्रवाह मेरी जिंदगी में
 मन ठहर सा गया है उस श्वेत जलधारा में
 जो आकाश को चूमती पर्वत श्रृंखलाओं के पार
 झरने के रूप में कल कल करती बहती है
 अब तो अभिव्यक्ति के शब्द भी मौन हुए से जाते हैं....
 मेरी क्या तकलीफ है, मैं किसे सुनाऊँ
 घुट घुट कर जी रही हूँ किसे बताऊँ
 सबका साथ होते हुए भी अकेली-सी हूँ मैं
 अपनी उलझने किसे समझाऊँ
 मन में उठे सवालोंने का उत्तर पाए बिना
 क्या मुझे समझौता कर लेना होगा
 वैसे डरती नहीं कठिन रास्तों पर चलने से
 खुद पर भरोसा कर जीवन के संग्राम में बनी हुई हूँ
 फिर भी मन में उठे विचारों के समंदर में डूबती सी चली जा रही हूँ
 और एक ही विचार प्रभावी है कि अपनी दास्तां कैसे सुनाऊँ
 शब्द है कि चुप हुए से जाते हैं....

कोमल साह, तृतीय वर्ष, हिंदी विभा

वह खूबसूरत वक्त एक जीवंत मृत्यु

क्यों समय की होड़ में, जीवन की भाग-दौड़ में
हम सबसे सुनहरे पलों को पीछे छोड़ आते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों दोस्तों की यादों में, स्कूल में हुई मुलाकातों में,
हम मम्मी के टिफिन बनाने की मेहनत को भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों समय की बयार में, स्टाइल और फैशन की आड़ में,
हमें तैयार करने के पीछे पापा की मोहब्बत को भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों फोन के अलार्म में, रिंगटोन की आवाज़ में,
हम मम्मी के जगाने के तरीकों को भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों स्कूटी के रौब में, बस की यारी के शौक में,
हम पापा के साथ स्कूल जाने का अहसास भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों आत्मनिर्भर बनने की कोशिश में, ज़िम्मेदार बनने की खाहिश में,
हम मम्मी का टिफिन स्कूल भिजवाना भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों जूते डालकर निकल जाने में, फिर वही जूते सबको दिखाने में,
हम पापा से फीते बंधवाने की अपनी आदत को भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों नए-नए खेल खेलने में, दोस्तों के साथ घूमने-फिरने में,
हम मम्मी के साथ लूडो खेलने का आराम भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों दूसरों के जैसा बनने में, घर से फोन आने पर चिढ़ने में,
हम पापा के साथ देश-दुनिया की चर्चा का मज़ा भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

क्यों आजाद होने के प्रयास में, आने वाले कल की आस में,
हम बीते हुए कल की उन खास बातों को भूल जाते हैं?
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं,
हम क्यों उस खूबसूरत वक्त को इतनी आसानी से भूल जाते हैं?

अनुष्का श्रीवास्तव, तृतीय वर्ष, राजनीति विज्ञान

एक बंद कमरे के बाहर से एक लाश गुज़र रही थी,
और उस बंद कमरे में बंधी बैठी मैं सिसक रही थी।

या तो मेरी चीखें उसके कानों में नहीं पड़ी,
या वो सब कुछ सुनकर भी कुछ नहीं समझी।

उस काली रात में हुई थी एक घटना और भी काली
मेरे चरित्र हनन के साथ लगी थी मेरे मुख पर कालिख ।

वो दर्द, वो हालात, वो मुझ पर उठा हैवानियत का हाथ
कैसे भूल पाऊँगी मैं-
जब इन सब के लिए समाज ठहराता है मुझे ही जिम्मेदार।

उन चीखों की आवाज आज भी मेरे कानों में गूँजती है
और वो पीड़ा सजीव होकर आज भी मेरी आँखों में बसती है।

ये कहते हैं सब भूल जाओ, पर क्या भूल जाऊँ मैं
वो जो उसने मेरे साथ किया या वो जो समाज ने उसके साथ किया?

न इंसाफ और न ही सम्मान मिला
पर मेरी मासूमियत को गलती का करार दिया गया
बलात्कार जैसी हैवानियत को इंसानियत का दर्जा मिला,
और मानवता के सीने को चीर दिया गया।

वो खुला घूम रहा है आज भी और अभी भी घुट रही मैं हूँ
मर तो मैं उसी दिन गई थी,
आज फिर मरने का इंतज़ार कर रही हूँ
आज फिर मरने का इंतज़ार कर रही हूँ.....

अनुष्का श्रीवास्तव, तृतीय वर्ष, राजनीति विज्ञान



日本 語 目 Japanese

私は車を見
わたしはくる
をみた。

私は車を見

Artwork By: Asmi Chawla, Economics, II Year

神聖さの幻想

この文章は、「エヴァンゲリオン」と言うアニメの精神的と心理的性質と、その背後にある曖昧な目的について私の解釈掘り下げています。

「新世紀エヴァンゲリオン」と言うアニメのストーリー全体は、人類の生存と人間の苦しみの除去の両方が究極の目標として設定された特定の結末に到達することです。そのためには、全世界が膨大な量の資源と資金を投入することが期待されています。皮肉なことに、これは人類ができる最も技術的な現実であり、権力を持つすべての人々の間には、意味を見つけ、神話を創りたいという生来の衝動がまだ存在している。このアニメは、人間には何らかの神が必要であるという現実を認識しており、それが科学の神である場合、誰もがこの神を崇拝することになる。

しかし、科学の崇拝は究極の目的ではありません。それはむしろ人間を神として高めることです。この世界で起こるすべての不幸で悲惨な結果は、人間が宇宙の神を捨てた結果として見るすることができます。

人類が救済を求めてキリストや宇宙の他の神々に頼ることを奨励する代わりに、SEELE組織の使命は、平和を見つけて苦しみから逃れるために、すべての個人をこの不自然で流動的な形で文字通り他のすべての人間と一体化させることです。彼らはこの使命を「人類補完計画」と呼んでいます。

主人公のシンジは、基本的に、二度と傷つきたくないと思わせることで補完を引き起こすために、生まれた日から人間として可能な限りの苦しみを強いられる人身御供です。しかし、補完の場合には、シンジは最終的に「魂の海」を離れ、再び人間の形をとるという希望的な選択をします。彼は、すべての人間を融合し、単一の集合意識を作り出すことによ

て人々間の距離と苦しみをなくそうとすることは悪いことだと理解しており、それが彼をその決断に導いたのです。

結局のところ、結末は、人間関係が必然的にもたらす痛みに対処することを学ぶことについてです。アニメ全体を通して、人間は「人類補完計画」を必要としていると信じる理由が十分に示されています。人間の全てが皆孤独で、魂に空洞があり、それが痛みや苦しみをもたらします。誤解や孤独を感じることなく、一人一人が一つになって完全になればもっと良いでしょう。しかし、微妙な方法で、それが必要ない理由も十分に示されています。すべてのキャラクターは、他の人に理解されることを拒み、トラウマが自分の意識に表面化したときには侵害されたまで感じさせます。しかし、お互いを理解し合うことができ、そのたびに彼らの苦しみが少しずつ和らげられる幸せな瞬間もあります。

それが、人間として生まれた目的、つまり「自由意志の種」を授かった創造物としての目的です。この神のような存在になることを追い求め、魂の海に集まることは、実は創造物がなす最も卑怯な行為です。心を開くことを恐れるので、人類をそのまま破壊することは、いかなる観点から見ても神聖ではなく、まさに「気持ち悪い」と表現されます。シンジがこの形態を取らないことを選択したことは、それがいかに魅力的であっても、彼をこれまでで最も傷ついた状態に置き去りにするとしても、自己受容の究極の形です。



Written by: Ananya Prasad, Economics Department, II Year

[聞こえない呼びかけ]

あなたは叫び声を上げる心を避け続け、

そしてそれが何も知らされずに逃げてしまったことを後悔します。

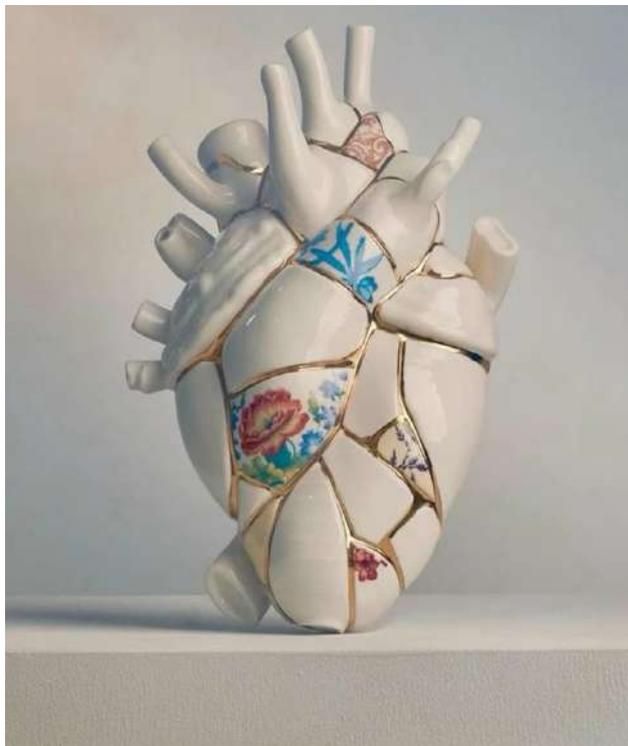
あなたは行方不明になった名も知らぬ心を識別するためにポスターを貼りますが、

前回その心があなたを呼んだとき、あなたはそれに応答さえしましたか！

[枯れた心の飢え]

私は、私の心は若くして引退し、その後存在するだけで鼓動するだろうが、愛が期限を過ぎて私を終わらせるまで愛を消費することを許さないことを認めました

私は耳元でそっと叫びました。「私はもう死んでいます。私の胃は、消化できる食べ物以外に食べ物を知らないからです。」



Written By: Tanishka, English Department, III Year



മനുഷ്യരും അടിമകളും

വെറുതേ ഹോണും നോക്കി സമയം കളഞ്ഞോണ്ടിരിക്കുകയായിരുന്നു ഞാൻ. അമ്മാമ്മ മുറുക്കാൻപാത്രം എടുക്കാനായി ഫ്രിഡ്ജ് തുറക്കുന്ന ശബ്ദം കേട്ടു. മൂന്നു മണിയോടടുത്തിട്ടുണ്ടാകണം, വായ നിറച്ച് മുറുക്കിയിട്ട് അമ്മാമ്മ ഒന്നു മയങ്ങാൻ കിടക്കുന്ന സമയമാണിത്. ഫ്രിഡ്ജ് അടച്ച് അമ്മാമ്മ ഞാനിരുന്ന തിണ്ണയിലേക്ക് നടന്നുവരുന്നത് ദിവാനിൽ കിടന്ന എനിക്ക് കേൾക്കാമായിരുന്നു. ഇടത് കയ്യിൽ മുറുക്കാൻ പാത്രവും, വലത് കയ്യിൽ വെറ്റിലയും, മുഖത്തെ സദാ ദയനീയ ഭാവവും എനിക്ക് തല പൊന്തിക്കാതെ തന്നെ കാണാമായിരുന്നു. അമ്മാമ്മ തൊട്ടടുത്തായുള്ള സോഫയിൽ ഇരുന്നു, ചാരിയില്ല. പാത്രത്തിൽ നിന്ന് പാക്ക് (അടയ്ക്ക) എടുത്ത് ചവക്കാൻ തുടങ്ങി. എനിട്ട് എനോടായി പറയാൻ തുടങ്ങി,

‘പണ്ടൊക്കെ പറയനും പുലയനും പാടത്ത് കഷ്ടപ്പെട്ട് പണിയെടുക്കും. പുലർച്ചെ തൊട്ട് രാത്രി വരെയും ഉണ്ടാവുമായിരിക്കും. രാത്രി ആയാലും ജന്മിമാർ വിടില്ല. ആരേലും എതിർത്താൽ അവരെ ജീവനോടെ പാടത്തിന് മട ആയി വയ്ക്കും.’

‘അവിടെ കിടന്ന് ചാവും, ആർ ചോദിക്കാനാ?’

അമ്മാമ്മ ദീർഘനിശ്വാസം എടുത്തു.

‘കുഞ്ഞേ... ഇപ്പഴാ മനുഷ്യൻ മനുഷ്യനായത്!’

ആർക്കും വേണ്ടാത്ത ശൂന്യത അവിടമൊക്കെ പറന്നു. അമ്മാമ്മയുടെ മുഖത്തെ ദയനീയത എന്റെ മുഖത്തേക്കും ആ മൌനത്തിൽ കൈമാറി. എന്റെ ചരിത്രത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് ആ മൌനം അലമുറയിട്ടുകൊണ്ടേയിരുന്നു. മൌനം ഞങ്ങളെ ചലിക്കുന്നതിൽ നിന്നും തടയുന്നു എന്ന് മനസ്സിലായ നിമിഷം ഞാൻ ‘മ്ം’ എന്ന് ചെറുതായി മൂളി. പക്ഷേ, ചലിക്കാനാവാതെ ഞങ്ങളിരുവരും മണിക്കൂറുകൾ അവിടീരുന്നുപോയി.



Written By: Aswathy K Raj,
Political Science, II Year

ഉഷസ്സ്

ഉഷസ്സിങ്ങു പൊട്ടി പുറപ്പെട്ടു നേരം,
ഊമയായി ഞാൻ അവതാരമേറ്റു.
ഞാൻ കണ്ട ലോകം എന്നെ വെറുത്തപ്പോൾ,
എൻ അമ്മ എന്നെ സ്നേഹപ്പാലൂട്ടി.

ഇന്നിതാ ആ അമ്മ എന്നെ ഏകനായി മാറ്റുമ്പോൾ,
ഉള്ളിലെ മുറിവുണങ്ങാതെ നിൽക്കുന്നു.
അമ്മയെന്നുള്ള രണ്ടക്ഷരം ചൊല്ലുവാൻ,
മോഹിച്ചു ഞാനിതാ ചാരത്തിൻ മുമ്പിൽ.

ഉഷസ്സിങ്ങു പൊട്ടി പുറപ്പെട്ടു നേരം,
ഏകനായി ഞാനിതാ ഈ തെരുവീഥിയിൽ.
കണ്ണീരണിഞ്ഞ ഈ ജീവിതയാത്രയിൽ,
അമ്മ തൻ ഓർമ്മകൾ മാത്രം ബാക്കിയായി.



*Written By: Ann Mary
Rozario, II Year*

ਘੋਲ ਘੋਲ

ਸੱਠ ਸਦੁਖੇ

ਠੇ ਨਥੇ, ਘੋਂਘੇ ਨਥੇ, ਸੀਘੇ ਨਥੇ॥
 ਸੀਘੇ ਨਥੇ ਏਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ,
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ,
 ਏਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਘੋਂਘੇ ਨਥੇ, ਏਘੇਘੇ ਘੋਂਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ॥

ਏਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ,
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ॥
 ਘੋਂਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇਘੇ॥

ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ॥
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇਘੇ॥

ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ॥
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ-ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ-ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ,

ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ, ਸਥੇਘੇ...

Moirangthem Bhagyashali, English Department, III Year

ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ,
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ॥
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ॥

ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ॥
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ?

ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ॥
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ,
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ
 ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ ਸਥੇਘੇ॥

Malem, English department, IIIrd Year



Artwork By: Priyanandini Gogoi
History, I Year



मराठी

Marathi

जीवन



" जगावं की मरावं, हाच प्रश्न आहे" (शेक्सपियर ३.१.५६-८९). अस्तित्त्ववादाचा सिद्धांत असे सांगतो की, जीवन स्वाभाविकरित्या अर्थहीन आहे आणि तरीही मनुष्य अर्थ शोधतो. जीवनाची निरर्थकता माहीत आहे आणि तरीही आपण अर्थ शोधतो आहोत, हीच इच्छाशक्ती, स्वातंत्र्य आणि परिपूर्णते कडे वाटचाल आहे. मला अनेकदा रेने डेकार्टेस यांचे विधान आठवते, "मी विचार करतो, म्हणून मी आहे." मनुष्य विचार करो वा न करो, त्याचे अस्तित्त्व असतेच. कदाचित फ्रॉइडने विचारलेला प्रश्न इथे आहे - 'मी' कोण आहे? स्वतःला न ओळखणारे प्राणी आपण, जगाला जाणण्याचा आणि तथ्ये व तर्कशुद्धतेवर आधारित वैज्ञानिक नवकल्पना शोधण्याचा कठोर प्रयत्न करत असतो. जेव्हा फ्रेडरिक नीत्शे म्हणाले की, "तथ्ये नाहीत, फक्त तर्कसंगती लावणे आहे." तेव्हा त्यांनी त्यातून, सत्याची अशक्यता आणि वैयक्तिक अनुभव, भावना आणि धारणेचा प्रभाव दर्शविला. आधुनिक तर्कशुद्धतेचा जोर, शक्य तितकी पोकळी भरून काढण्याचा आणि प्रत्येक गोष्टीबद्दल निश्चितता प्राप्त करून त्यावर नियंत्रण ठेवण्याचा असतो. जेव्हा अल्बर्ट काम्यू म्हणतात की "अतर्क्य" हे, आपल्या मानवी जीवनातील सुव्यवस्था निर्माण करण्याची इच्छा, जीवनाचा अर्थ व उद्देश आणि विश्वाची अथांग, उदासीन "शांतता" यांच्यातील द्वंद्व किंवा संघर्षांचे फलीत आहे, तेव्हा मी आपण आणि विश्व यांतील फरक अधोरेखित करतो. सन १९९९ च्या 'फाईट क्लब'(चक पालाह्न्युक यांच्या १९९६ च्या त्याच नावाच्या कादंबरीवर आधारित) या अमेरिकन चित्रपटा मध्ये डेव्हिड फिंचरने दिग्दर्शित केलेल्या दोन पुरुषांचे, निरुद्देश किंवा शत्रुत्वाशिवाय केलेले भांडण पाहून मला आश्चर्य वाटते. ते खरंच भांडण होते की, त्यांचे भांडण हा, केवळ चिंताग्रस्त आणि निराश व्यक्तींच्या दुःखांना वाट करून देण्याचा तो एक मार्ग होता. आपण काय शोधतो? महत्त्वाकांक्षा की शांती? आपण खरंच निवड करतो का? मला जीन-पॉल सार्त्र यांचे म्हणणे आठवते, "एका अर्थाने निवड शक्य आहे, पण जे शक्य नाही, ते म्हणजे निवड न करणे. मी नेहमी निवड करू शकतो, पण मला हे माहित असले पाहिजे की जर मी निवड केली नाही, तर ती सुद्धा एक निवड आहे," म्हणजेच तुम्ही निवड न करण्याची निवड करू शकत नाही, तुम्ही कसेही करून निवड करण्यास बांधील आहात. म्हणजे आपण असमर्थ आहोत का? आपल्या जीवनाला आपण स्वतःच अर्थ आणि उद्देश देण्याच्या कल्पना आपल्या अस्तित्त्वाला सामर्थ्यवान बनवते.

आपण जन्म का घेतो? आपण काहीही न करण्यासाठी जन्म घेतो. आपण मरण्यासाठी जन्म घेत नाही, आपण मरण्यास बांधलेले आहोत. आपण द्वेष किंवा सलोखा पसरवण्याच्या उद्देशाने जन्म घेत नाही. आशेने आपण जन्म घेतो.



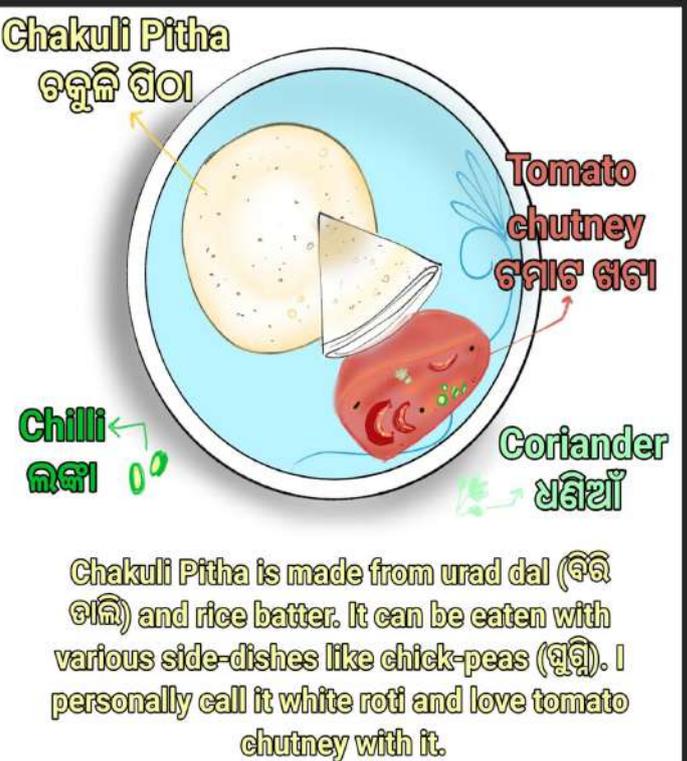
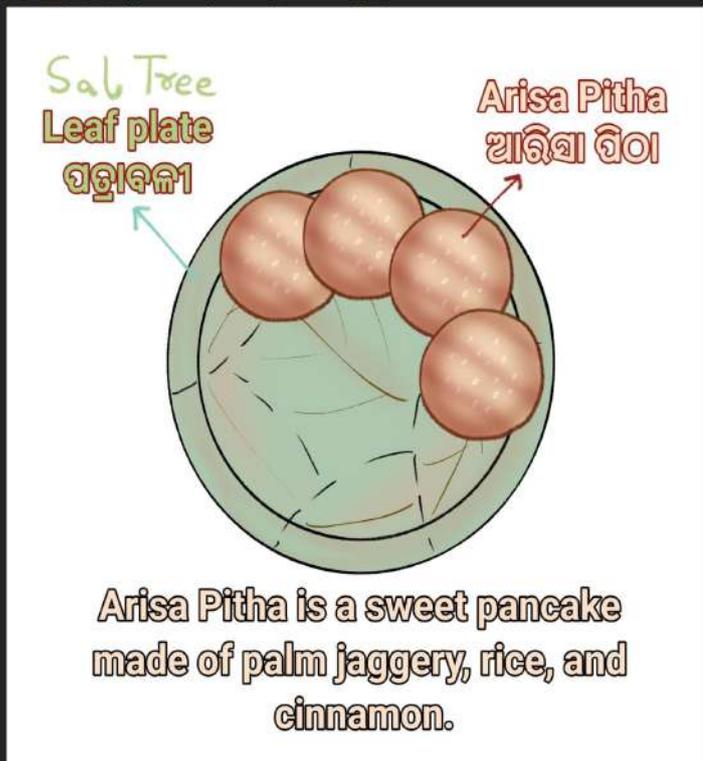
ODIA



ଓଡ଼ିଆ

Artwork By: Asmi Chawla, Economics, II Year

COMIC STRIP FOR YOU





ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

PUNJABI



Artwork By: *Simran Saroop, Psychology, III Year*

ਬਟਵਾਰਾ



ਦੇਵੇਂ ਦੇਸ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਏ ਅਜ਼ਾਦ
ਪਰ ਲੋਕ ਕਉ ਨਾ ਹੋਏ ਅਬਾਦ
ਪਹਲਿਾਂ ਸਹਿਾ ਜੁਲਮ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ
ਹੁਣ ਆਪਸ ਵਾਚਿ ਹੀ ਲੜ ਰਹੇ ਨੇ
ਇੱਕ ਲੀਕ ਨਾ ਦੂਰ ਹੋਏ
ਕਉ ਓ ਸਭ ਨੇ ਭੁੱਲੇ ਹੋਏ
ਉਹ ਪੇਸ਼ਾਵਰ ਦੀ ਰੇਲ ਗੱਡੀ
ਕਸਿ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਖਣ ਕਸਿ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਤਰ ਲੈ ਗਈ
ਟੋਬਾ ਟੇਕ ਸਾਧਿ ਓਹ ਮੰਟੀ ਦਾ ਟੁੱਕੜਾ
ਨਾ ਹਲਿਆ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਹਲਿਆ ਸਕਿਆ
ਜਵਿੰ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ ਓਹ ਪਾਗਲ ਪਿਆਰ,
ਕਉ ਨਾ ਸਾਇਣੇ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ
ਬਟਵਾਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਦਲਿਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ,
ਕਉ ਨਾ ਓਹ ਸਮਝ ਸਕੇ।।

Esther, Department of English, III Year





Artwork By: Sysha Bangia, Commerce, I Year

स्वस्य अन्वेषणम्

मातृ - भूमि



श्रान्तः पदं दिशासु, अन्विष्य स्वमार्गम्,
कदा सूर्यातपे दग्धः पदं, कदा छायायाः स्पृहा।
वर्णविचित्राणि स्वप्नानि, नयनयोः समाहृत्य,
कदा जीवनं पठितुं धावति, कदा स्वयं सृजति॥

कदा पुस्तकानां पृष्ठेषु, कदा संगीतस्य लये,
कदा स्वजनानां वचनेषु, कदा एकाकित्वस्य निस्वने।
प्रत्येकं वर्त्मनि प्रतीयते यथा, अधुना प्राप्स्यामि उत्तरम्,
परं प्रत्युत्तरस्य पुरतः पुनः उत्थिताः नूतनाः प्रश्नाः अगण्याः॥

ततः एकदा सर्वं नीरसं प्रतीयते, मनसः गतिः स्थगिता भवति,
यत् ह्यः नूतनम् आसीत्, तद् अधुना केवलं स्थितिः प्रतीयते।
पदं न अग्रे गच्छति, मनः विरमितुम् इच्छति,
स्वस्य पहचान् एव यथा धूम्रे लीयते॥

तर्हि किं त्यक्ष्यामि एतत् यात्राम्? किं श्रान्तः उपविशामि?
अथवा एतेषु अपूर्णेषु प्रश्नेषु, कांश्चित् प्रकाशं प्रज्वालयामि?
शायद् अन्वेषणस्य अर्थः एषः एव, न विरमितुं, न स्थगितुम्,
स्वान्ते निस्तब्धतायां, स्वयम् पुनः मिलितुम्॥

यत् गतं, तत् अधिगतम्, यत् सम्मुखं, तत् अवसरः,
प्रत्येकं विरामस्य पृष्ठतः, गूढः भवति नूतनः पन्थाः।
यत् अपूर्णं प्रतीयते, ततः एव आरभ्य पुनः,
सर्वः मार्गः नेष्यति तत्र, यत्र तव वास्तविकं अस्तित्वं स्थिरम्॥

Written by: Bhoomika Kapale, Department of Sanskrit, IInd Year

Edited by: Yati, Department of Sanskrit, IIIrd Year

हे देवि मातृ भूमि
मम जीवनं त्वदीयम्।
तुभ्यं धनं मदीयम्
तुभ्यं बलं मदीयम्॥

हे देवि मातृ भूमि

तव कीर्तये च माता
तव प्रीतये च माता ।
बुद्धिर्ममास्तु माता
कार्ये च मे समस्तम्॥

हे देवि मातृ भूमि

विद्यां कलां च शिक्षाम्
प्राप्नोमि तुभ्यमेव।
तव शान्तये समस्तम्
यदर्पयामि तुभ्यम्।



संस्कृतस्य पठनस्य लाभः

भारतस्य प्राचीनभाषा संस्कृतं न केवलं संचारमाध्यमम् अपितु ज्ञानस्य, संस्कृतिस्य, बुद्धेः च निधिस्थं द्वारं अस्ति । संस्कृतं पठनं समृद्धिकर-अनुभवः भवितुम् अर्हति तथा च सः संज्ञानात्मक-सांस्कृतिक-व्यक्तिगत-वृद्धौ योगदानं करोति ।

संस्कृतं पठनं मस्तिष्कं अद्वितीयरीत्या प्रवर्तयति । अस्य जटिलसंरचना, समृद्धः शब्दकोशः, जटिलव्याकरणं च एतत् मानसिकं व्यायामं करोति यत् मस्तिष्कस्य कार्यं वर्धयति । नियमितरूपेण संस्कृतं पठन् स्मृति, ध्यानं, विश्लेषणात्मकं च चिन्तनं सुधरितुं शक्नोति । संस्कृत पठनेन अन्यभाषायाः विषयाणां शिक्षण क्षमता अपि वर्धते ।

यतो हि संस्कृतं बहुषु आधुनिकभाषासु मूलम् अस्ति, विशेषतः भारतीय उपमहाद्वीपे (यथा हिन्दी, बङ्गला, कन्नड, इत्यादयः), संस्कृताभ्यासेन शब्दावली, व्याकरणं, उच्चारणकौशलं च सुदृढं भवति । संस्कृतस्य अवगमनं अपि शब्दानां व्युत्पत्तिविज्ञानं, आङ्ग्लभाषायां अन्यभाषासु अपि शब्दकोशं समृद्धयति इति अपि सहायकं भवति ।

संस्कृते पठनस्य एकः महत्तमः लाभः अस्ति यत् एतत् प्राचीनशास्त्रं ग्रन्थं च प्रत्यक्षं प्रवेशं प्रदाति ये हिन्दुदर्शनस्य, आध्यात्मिकतायाः, संस्कृतिस्य च आधारशिलाः सन्ति ।

संस्कृतं भारते आध्यात्मिकप्रथैः सह दृढं रूपेण सम्बद्धम् अस्ति । विश्वस्य बहवः प्राचीनतमाः आध्यात्मिकप्रथाः, यथा योगः, ध्यानञ्च, संस्कृतपाठानां आधारेण भवन्ति । स्वमूलभाषायां पवित्रग्रन्थानां पठनं व्यक्तिभिः आध्यात्मिकशिक्षायाः पूर्णगहनतां अनुभवितुं शक्नोति । संस्कृतशब्दानां लयं ध्वनिश्च मनः शरीरे च गहनः प्रभावः भवति इति मन्यते, मानसिकशान्तिं, अन्तःसौहार्दं च प्रवर्धयति ।

संस्कृतं पठित्वा शिक्षणं च कृत्वा वयं तस्य संरक्षणे योगदानं कुर्मः तथा च निरन्तरं प्रासंगिकतां योगदानं कुर्मः । संस्कृतं न केवलं भारते महत्त्वपूर्णं अपितु वैश्विक-आध्यात्मिक-शैक्षणिक-चर्चासु अपि स्थानं धारयति । यथा, संस्कृतं तुलनात्मकधर्मस्य, प्राचीन-इतिहासस्य, दर्शनस्य च अध्ययनस्य केन्द्रम् अस्ति । एतया समृद्धेन, प्राचीनभाषायाः सह संलग्नं कृत्वा वयं न केवलं भूतकालस्य विषये अस्माकं अवगमनं वर्धयामः अपितु अधिकगभीरं, विचारशीलं, सम्बद्धं च भविष्यं योगदानं कुर्मः ।

Written by: Smriti Verma, Department of Sanskrit, IInd Year
Edited by: Yati, Department of Sanskrit, IIIrd Year



मिनी माता

कदाचित् न दृष्टं मां मातरं सदृशम्,
ना केवलं सा मम माता, किंतु दिव्यतरम्।
कथं स्यात् कश्चित् एवम् अतीव करुणामयः?
मम हृदयम् व्यथते एता कविता रचयितुं—

कथां चंचलायाः, सरलहृदयायाः, अद्वितीयायाः,
आध्यात्मिकायाः, सौन्दर्यवत्याः च निर्दोषायाः।
एवं कथं न स्यात्, सर्वसंघर्षे,
सा भारं वहति हास्येन, जीवनस्य स्फूर्तेः।

पुनः अपि सा न उद्धाटयति हृदयस्य गूढम्,
न कस्यापि प्रति, यथा सूर्यः न गुप्तम्।
त्वं शतपृच्छानां उत्तरम् धारयति,
बलस्य स्तम्भः, प्रत्येक आलिङ्गने।

यदा क्लान्तः भवामि, तन्वि वा हि मनसि,
त्वं पुनः जीवनं प्राणयति मम।
विना शब्देन, त्वं कथयसि बहु,
दुःखानि सहते, हास्येन यथा घरा।

एवं मां प्रेरयसि, मातरि मम प्रिये,
त्वमेव मम आश्रयः, त्वमेव मम शक्तिः।
नहि त्वत्तः परं, नहि तव विना सुखम्,
माता मम, त्वं जीवितस्य प्रकाशम्।

*Written by: Amita Srivastava, Department of Sanskrit,
1st Year*

Edited by: Yati, Department of Sanskrit, IIIrd Year

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

अधुना निखिले संसारे कलहस्य अशान्तेः च वातावरणम् अस्ति। मानवाः
परस्परं न विश्वसन्ति। ते नरस्य कष्टं न गणयन्ति। अपि च समर्थाः देशाः
असमर्थान् देशान् उपेक्षाभावं । प्रदर्शयन्ति, तेषाम् उपरि स्वकीयं प्रभुत्वं
स्थापयन्ति। संसारे सर्वत्र विद्वेषस्य, शत्रुतायाः, हिंसायाः च भावना
दृश्यते। देशानां विकासः अपि अवरुद्धः भवति ।

इयम् महती आवश्यकता वर्तते यत् एकः देशः अपरेण देशेन सह निर्मलेन
हृदयेन बन्धुतायाः व्यवहारं कुर्यात्। विश्वस्य जनेषु इयं भावना आवश्यकी।
ततः विकसिताविकसितयौः देशयोः मध्ये स्वस्था स्पर्धा भविष्यति। सर्वे
देशाः ज्ञानविज्ञानयोः क्षेत्रे मैत्रीभावनया सहयोगेन च समृद्धिं प्राप्तुं समर्थाः
भविष्यन्ति। सूर्यस्य चन्द्रस्य च प्रकाशेः सर्वत्र समानरूपेण प्रसरति ।
प्रकृतिः अपि सर्वेषु समत्वेन व्यवहरति । तस्मात् अस्माभिः सर्वैः परस्परं
वैरभावम् अपहाय विश्वबन्धुत्वं स्थापनीयम् ।

अतः विश्वस्य कल्याणाय एतादृशी भावना भवेत् अयं निजः परो वेति
गणना लघुचेतसाम् । उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

*Written by: Arya Singh, Department of Sanskrit, IIIrd
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*Edited by: Bhoomika Kapale, Department of Sanskrit,
IInd Year*



समयस्य सदुपयोगः

यत् कार्यं यस्मिन् समये करणीयं भवेत् तत्कार्यं तस्मिन्नेव समये कुर्यात् इदमेव समयस्य सदुपयोगः कथ्यते। यतः समयं अमूल्यः। अस्य उपयोगेन एव सिद्धिः प्राप्तुं शक्यते। ये जनाः प्रमादेन आलस्येन वा समयं यापयन्ति, यथासमयं कार्यं न सम्पादयन्ति, आत्मानं प्रतारयन्ति ते कदापि स्वकार्येषु सफलता न लभन्ते।

अनेन कथितम् क्षिप्रमक्रियमाणस्य कालः पिबन् तद्रसम्। अपि च - समयच्युतिः अर्थात् समयस्य व्यर्थमेव नाशः महती हानिः।

पश्यत, यथासमयं कृशकाः महता परिश्रमेण क्षेत्राणि कृश्ट्वा, बीजानि वपन्ति, जलेन सिं चन्ति, तेषाम् अहर्निशं रक्षां कुर्वन्ति, तदा ते पप्रभूतम् अन्नं प्राप्नुवन्ति। तेन अन्नेन ते धनं सुखं च लभन्ते। ये च उचिते समये न कर्षन्ति, न वपन्ति, स्वकृषिकर्म प्रति उपेक्षां कुर्वन्ति ते यावज्जीवनं दरिद्राः दुःखिनश्च भूत्वा पश्चात्तपन्ते।

प्रथमे नार्जिता विद्या, द्वितीये नार्जितं धनम्। तृतीये नार्जितं पुण्यं, चतुर्थे किं करिष्यति।

अतः अस्माकमपि एतत् कर्तव्यं यद् परिहार्यम् समयना न दोशान् निद्रा, तन्द्राम्, आलस्यं दीर्घसत्त्वतां च परिहराम् आलस्यं तु नरस्य महान् रिपुः। अथ च स्वकल्याणाय समयस्य महद् मूल्यं ज्ञात्वा तस्य सदुपयोगं कुर्याम्।

पठनकाले पठाम् क्रीडनकाले

क्रीडाम्, कार्यकाले च कार्यं कुर्याम्, तदैव वयं योग्याः यशस्विनश्च भविष्यामः। बुद्धिमन्तः जनाः समयस्य सदुपयोगं कुर्वन्ति

काव्यशास्त्रविनोदेन कालो गच्छति धीमताम्। व्यसनेन तु मूर्खाणां निद्रा कल्हेन वा।।

Written by: Somya, Department of Sanskrit, IIIrd Year

Edited by: Yati, Department of Sanskrit, IIIrd Year

योगः चित्तस्य शीतलता

"योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः"

योगः मनसः चंचलतां निवारयति। यदा चित्तः स्थिरः भवति, तदा शीतलता लभ्यते। ध्यानं संयमः संतुलितं जीवनं च मानवाय मानसिकशारीरिक च शान्तिं प्रयच्छन्ति। योगन न केवलं शरीरस्य स्वास्थ्यं भवति, अपितु आत्मनोन्नतिं अपि प्राप्यते।

योगाभ्यासेन चित्तस्य विक्षेपः निवर्तते, जीवनं संतुलितं भवति। अनादिकालात् योगः भारतीयसंस्कृतेः अविभाज्यं अंशः अस्ति। महर्षिः पतंजलिनाः अस्य महत्त्वं स्पष्टं प्रदर्शितं, यः योगस्य अष्ट अङ्गानि - यमः नियमः, आसनः, प्राणायामः, प्रत्याहारः, धारणाः, ध्यानः समाधिः प्रतिपदितानि।

अतः अस्माकं जीवनस्य शान्तये योगः अनिवार्यः अस्ति। यत्र योगः, तत्र शान्तिः, स्वास्थ्यं च।

Written by: Shivani Kumari, Department of Sanskrit, IIrd Year

Edited by: Bhoomika Kapale, Department of Sanskrit, IIrd Year



कालिदासस्य काव्येषु धर्मः

पुरुषार्थचतुष्टयं मानवजीवनस्य प्रमुखोद्देश्यं वर्तते। पुरुषार्थचतुष्टये धर्मः, अर्थः, कामः, मोक्षश्च विद्यन्ते। एषु धर्मः प्रथमोऽस्ति यतोहि धर्म एव मानवानां विशिष्टगुणो भवति।

महाकविः कालिदासः संस्कृतकविषु सर्वश्रेष्ठः विद्यते। तेन स्वकाव्येषु यद्यपि पुरुषार्थचतुष्टयस्य वर्णनं कृतं तथापि धर्मस्य वर्णनं तत्र प्रमुखरूपेण कृतमस्ति।

भारतीयसंस्कृतौ धर्मस्य अभिप्रायः कर्तव्यं भवति। तैत्तिरीयोपनिषदि कथितमस्ति - सत्यं वद, धर्मं चर अर्थात् सत्यं वदनीयं धर्मश्च आचरणीयः। कालिदासस्य प्रमुखत्रयाणां काव्यानां कथाः स्वकर्तव्यस्य अपालनेन अग्रेसरन्ति। यथा रघुवंशस्य प्रथमसर्गे वर्णितमस्ति यत् स्वर्गगतः राजा दिलीपः कल्पवृक्षस्य अधः उपविष्टायाः कामधेनोः परिक्रमां नाकरोत्। अतः सा सुरभिः तं नृपं दिलीपं शप्तवती यतोहि पूज्यानाम् अपूजनं तु अपराध एव भवति।

अथ च अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलेऽपि महर्षिः कण्वः स्वपुत्रीं शकुन्तलाम् अतिथिसत्काराय नियुज्य तस्याः प्रतिकूलं दैवं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः। शून्यहृदया च सा अतिथिवर्यदुर्वासामहर्षेः आतिथ्यं न कृतवती अनेन सापि दुर्वासामहर्षिणा शापग्रस्ता अभवत्।

एवमेव मेघदूते कथा अस्ति यत् तस्य नायकः यक्षः नवविवाहितः आसीत्। तस्मात्कारणात् स स्वाधिकारात् प्रमत्तोऽभवत् अतः सोऽपि यक्षराजेन कुबेरेण शापग्रस्तः सञ्जातः।

धर्मस्य प्रयोगः यदि शीर्षके धार्मिकक्रियायाः कृते अस्ति, एष महाकविः अस्मिन् कर्मणि अपि कुशलोऽस्ति यथा रघुवंशे दिलीपस्य कृते कथिमस्ति यत् “दुदोह गां स यज्ञाय”। अत्र एव स धर्मं भजे। अनातुरः कथयित्वा कविः वर्णयति यत् स नृपः निजधर्मस्य पालनं क्लेशरहितो भूत्वा करोति स्म।

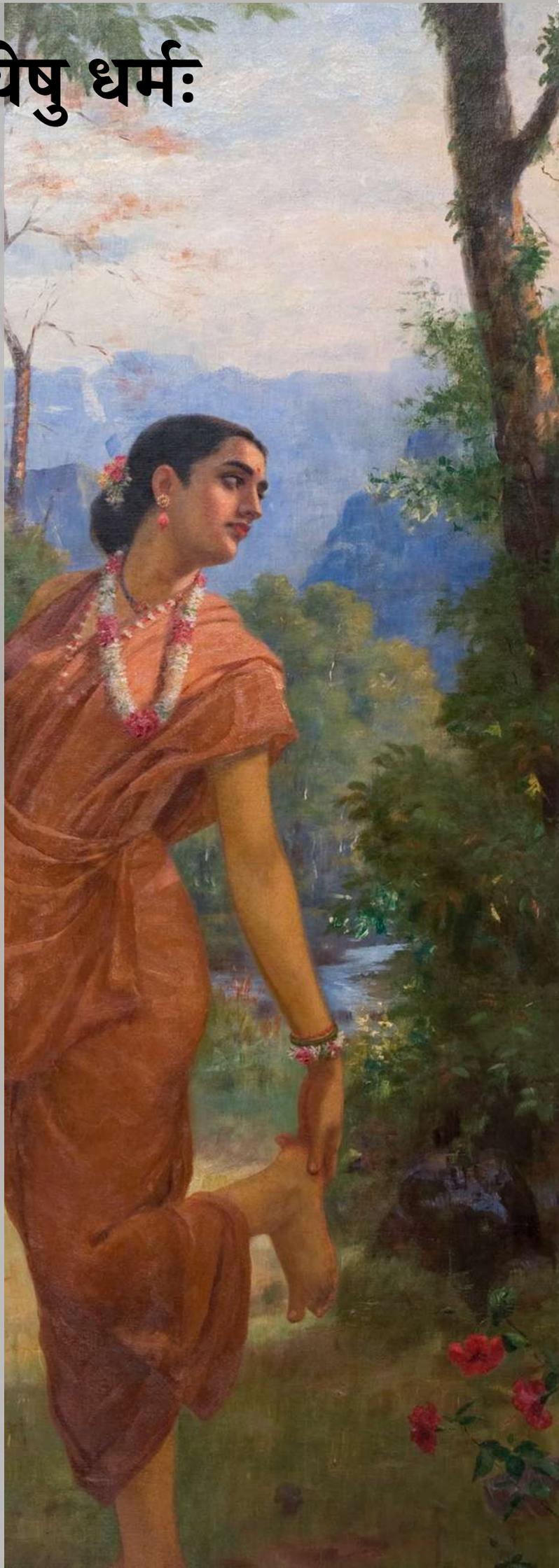
दुष्यन्तोऽपि धर्मक्रियारक्षकः आसीत्। हस्तिनापुरं प्राप्ताः ऋषयः कथयन्ति यत् “कुतो धर्मक्रियाविघ्नः सतां रक्षितरि त्वयि”।

एवम् अस्य कवेः नायकाः कर्तव्यपरायणाः आसन्। रघुवंशे नृपाः अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलस्य दुष्यन्तः अस्य उदाहरणानि सन्ति।

एवमेव कुलपतिना कण्वेन चतुर्थेऽङ्के शकुन्तलायाः प्रस्थानसमये उपदिष्टाः - “शुश्रूषस्व गुरून्” इत्यादयः उपदेशाः वर्तमानकालेऽपि प्रासंगिकाः सन्ति। एवं कथयितुं शक्यते यत् महाकविः कालिदासः सत्यमेव धर्मस्य प्रतिष्ठापकोऽस्ति। यदा एष उद्धोषयति यत् “शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्” अस्य अयमेव अभिप्रायः यत् धार्मिकक्रियाः कर्तव्यपालनम् च मानवशरीरेण एव कर्तुं शक्यन्ते।



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प्रहेलिका

१. अहं सर्वेषु लोकेषु प्रकाशं ददामि सदा,
अहमेव दिनं रात्रिं च साधयामि पुनः पुनः।
नैव चलामि, तथापि गच्छामि,
सर्वे मां दृष्ट्वा जाग्रति, निद्रां यान्ति पुनः।
कोऽहम्?
उत्तरः सूर्यः

२. अहं गगनात् पतित्वा, पर्वतेभ्यः वहाम्यहम्।
ग्रामं ग्रामं संचारयामि, किन्तु स्वगृहं न गच्छामि।
पतितं जनं उद्धरामि, जलं ददामि जीवनाय।
कोऽहम्?
उत्तरः वर्षा

३. स्थिरोऽहं, तथापि जीवामि,
छायाम् अहं सर्वदा ददामि।
पत्राणि नित्यं पतन्ति,
किंतु स्वयं न पतामि।
कोऽहम्?
उत्तरः वृक्षः

४. दिनस्य शत्रुः अहम्, तथापि सौम्यः अस्मि।
न मम तेजः स्वकीयम्, अन्यस्मात् लभे प्रकाशम्।
पक्षे पूर्णः, पक्षे खण्डः,
प्रतिदिनं रूपं परिवर्तयामि।
कोऽहम्?
उत्तरः चन्द्रः

५. तिमिरस्य मित्रं नास्मि,
सर्वदा तमः निवारयामि।
स्वयं ज्वलामि, अन्यान् प्रकाशयामि।
वायुः माम् नाशयति, किन्तु दीपोत्सवे पूज्योऽस्मि
कोऽहम्?
उत्तरः दीपः

*Written by: Shruti Sharma, Department of Sanskrit,
IIIrd Year*

*Edited by: Bhoomika Kapale, Department of Sanskrit,
IIInd Year*



ESPAÑOL

Spanish



Artwork By: Shambhavi Sharma , Journalism, III Year

Vas a Ser Amada



Me despierto cansada.
Las mismas paredes.
El mismo peso.
Y aún así, me peino el cabello,
me pongo perfume,
como si a alguien le importara.

Nadie escucha de verdad.
Pero igual respondo sus mensajes.
Asiento a sus bromas.
Hago espacio para su tristeza
mientras la mía espera en silencio.

Detrás de esta expresión serena
hay algo más frío,
ni rabia, ni dolor,
solo una resignación callada.

Dejé de compartir
cuando entendí
que la gente solo quiere la verdad
si no los incomoda.

Me susurró con dulzura:
“Vas a ser amada.”
Aunque aún no lo crea.

Algunos días me siento
como un cuarto vacío
con cortinas bonitas.
Pero igual abro la ventana.
Todavía rocío el perfume.

No por ellos.
Por mí.
Porque incluso cuando todo parece
sin sentido,
intento que sea hermoso.

Ishita Chaudhary, BAP, 2nd year





اردو
URDU

معروف براڈکاسٹر رضا علی عابدی اپنی کتاب " ملکہ-وکٹوریہ اور منشی عبدالکریم " میں ملکہ کی اردو دانی اور سلسلے میں منشی عبدالکریم کے رول پر خاصی روشنی ڈالی ہے۔ ملکہ نے اپنے روز نامے میں تحریر کرتی ہے " میں کچھ ہندوستانی لفظ سیکھ رہی ہوں تاکہ اپنے ملازموں سے بات کر سکوں "

اس سلسلے میں ایک کتابچہ ترتیب دیا گیا جس میں تمام ضروری ہندوستانی فقرے اور لفظ درج کر کے اسے نہ صرف شہزادیوں ' شہزادوں بلکہ محل کے تمام عملے میں تقسیم کیا گیا تاکہ وہ سب اہل بند سے ان کی زبان میں گفتگو کرسکیں۔ یہ کتابچہ در اصل منشی عبد الکریم نے ہی ترتیب دیا تھا۔ عابدی کے مطابق جب عبدالکریم منشی بن گئے۔ تو ملکہ کو اردو سکھانے کے ساتھ ساتھ اسکو میر ' غالب اور مومن کے اشعار سنانے لگے۔

ملکہ وکٹوریہ اس لیے بھی شخصی طور اردو زبان سیکھنے کی جانب مایل ہوئی۔ اسکی اہم وجہ عبدالکریم کی تہذیبی اور مجلسی آداب زندگی تھے۔ اسی لیے اردو سکھانے کے لیے کریم کو آمادہ کیا۔ وہ ایک اتالیق کے روپ میں مہارانی کو اردو زبان سکھاتا تھا۔ کریم ملکہ کی نوٹ بک میں اردو کی ایک لائن لکھ دیتے ساتھ میں انگریزی ترجمہ بھی لکھ دیتے۔ رانی بوبہو اسکی نقل کرتی۔ شربانی بسو اپنی کتاب " وکٹوریہ اینڈ عبدل " میں لکھتی ہے کہ مہارانی عبدل سے 13 برس تک اردو کی تعلیم حاصل کرتی رہی۔ اور اس کو پڑھنے ' اور لکھنے میں فخر محسوس کرتی تھی۔ چاہے سفر میں ہو یا چھٹیوں پر وہ اردو کا سبق حاصل کرنا نہیں بولتی۔ رات میں سونے سے پہلے اردو زبان کی مشق ضرور کرتی تھیں۔

یو نیور سٹی آف لندن کے پروفیسر ہمایوں انصاری ملکہ کی اردو دانی کے تعلق سے لکھتے ہیں

مہارانی اپنی ڈائری میں اردو لکھتی تھی۔ جیسے " آج کا دن اچھا رہا " تحریر میں روانی اور جوش تھا۔ وہ ایک ایسی زبان پر مہارت حاصل کرنا چاہتی تھی۔ جس سے اسکا دور دور کا واسطہ نہیں تھا۔ لیکن اس نے جو کامیابی حاصل کی اس سے میں بہت متاثر ہوں۔

2017 انگلستان میں مہارانی اور کریم کے درمیان مصاحبت پر جو فلم-بعنوان وکٹوریہ اینڈ عبدل ریلیز ہوئی اس میں بھی اردو زبان کے تعلق سے بھی بہت کچھ درشایا گیا ہے۔ 1888 میں جب عبدل چار ماہ کی رخصت پر ہندوستان چلا گیا تو اس دوران ملکہ عالیہ اسکو برابر خط لکھتی رہی۔ 1893 میں ملکہ نے عبدل کو لکھے خط کے آخر پر لکھا۔ " تمہاری والدہ " اور اپنے دستخط اردو میں کیے۔ ملکہ وکٹوریہ نے منشی عبدالکریم کی متاثر کن خدمات کے اعتراف میں وقت وقت پر اسکو مختلف اعزازات سے نوازا۔ جیسے 1895 میں آڈر آف انڈین امپیریل اور 1899 میں رائل وکٹورین آرڈر کے خطابات سے سرفراز کیا گیا جب 1901 میں ملکہ وکٹوریہ کا انتقال ہوا تو منشی عبدالکریم کو شاہی محل کی تمام ذمہ داریوں سے نئے بادشاہ ایڈوارڈ نے سبکدوش کیا۔ نیز انہیں بعد میں بہت ستایا گیا۔ وہ اپنے وطن آگرہ روانہ ہوا اور وہیں پر ہندوستانی اور برطانوی روابطی تاریخ کا ایک دلچسپ اور اہم باب اختتام کو پہنچا۔ یعنی 1909 میں آگرے میں منشی عبدالکریم کا محض 46 کی عمر میں انتقال ہوا۔





News Recap

NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS 2024

Each year, the Nobel Prize celebrates individuals and organisations whose groundbreaking work shapes history, fosters innovation, and advances humanity, reaffirming its legacy as the pinnacle of global achievement.

In Physics, John J. Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton were awarded for foundational discoveries and pioneering work in artificial neural networks. The Nobel Prize for Chemistry was bestowed upon David Baker, Demis Hassabis and John Jumper for computational protein design and protein structure prediction. Medicine honoured Victor Ambros and Gary Ruvkun for the discovery of microRNA and its role in post-transcriptional gene regulation. Literature lauds Han Kang for her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life. Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Peace Prize for efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that nuclear weapons must never be used again. Economists Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson were commended for studies of how institutions are formed and affect prosperity.

These discoveries continue to advance and inspire different fields and society in general.



Written By: Jiya Pahade, Journalism, I Year

WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2024



The year 2024 has proved to be a golden year for Indian chess. India had previously won dual gold at the Chess Olympiad in Budapest. Around the same time, another historic win was quietly taking root.

In April 2024, Gukesh Dommaraju stunned the world by winning the Candidates Tournament in Toronto, earning him a shot at the reigning World Champion Ding Liren from China. The championship took place between 25th November and 12th December, in Singapore.

Ding, a former World No. 2, faced the 18-year-old challenger in an intense series of matches. With the score tied at 6.5–6.5 heading into the final round, the general expectation was rapid tiebreaks. However, a blunder under time pressure by Ding, combined with Gukesh's precise play led to a decisive victory for Gukesh. With this win, he clinched the title of the youngest undisputed World Chess Champion in history, a perfect parting gift for the year.

Written By: Yashika Jain, English, I Year
Artwork By: Raeka Sharma, English, I Year

COP29

The 29th UN Climate Change Conference, COP29, took place from November 11 to November 22, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan, with climate finance emerging as a central theme. A landmark agreement was reached to triple funding for developing nations, aiming for \$300 billion annually by 2035, with an ambitious aspiration of mobilizing \$1.3 trillion to help vulnerable nations combat climate disasters and transition to clean energy.

With participation from nearly 200 countries, COP29 also addressed crucial issues such as adaptation financing, transition away from fossil fuels, and global carbon market regulations. While progress was made, debates over equitable financial contributions and implementation mechanisms remained key challenges.

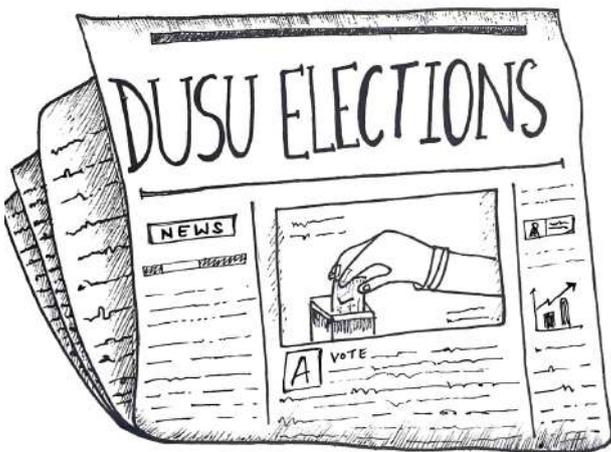
For the Global South, the summit's outcomes offer hope for greater financial support in building climate resilience. However, concerns remain over whether developed nations will fulfil their pledges. The success of these commitments depends on transparent funding mechanisms and fair distribution.



Written by: Pakhi Dhokariya, Political Science Department, II Year

Photo Credit: COP29

2024 DUSU ELECTIONS IN A CAPSULE



The 2024 DUSU elections were much more than an annual student exercise; they reflected India's cultural and political diversity, opening up avenues for democratic participation while raising crucial questions. With elections to India's largest student body having large-scale ramifications, a total of 21 candidates contested four key positions.

The 2024 elections culminated in a tight contest between NSUT's Ronak Khatri and ABVP's Rishabh Chaudhary for the presidential position, with Khatri surpassing the latter by over 1,300 votes. However, an election fought over critical issues such as infrastructural overhauls, women's safety, and the rollback of FYUP was not entirely free of political controversies. The Supreme Court expressed outrage over rampant vandalism and defacement of public property, even suggesting the deferral of elections in case of non-compliance.

In another jolt to the student body, the SC underscored the squandering of unaudited money in elections, comparing it to the stagnant state of the nation. Nevertheless, the elections were a testament to India's democratic spirit, with popular participation ultimately determining the outcomes.

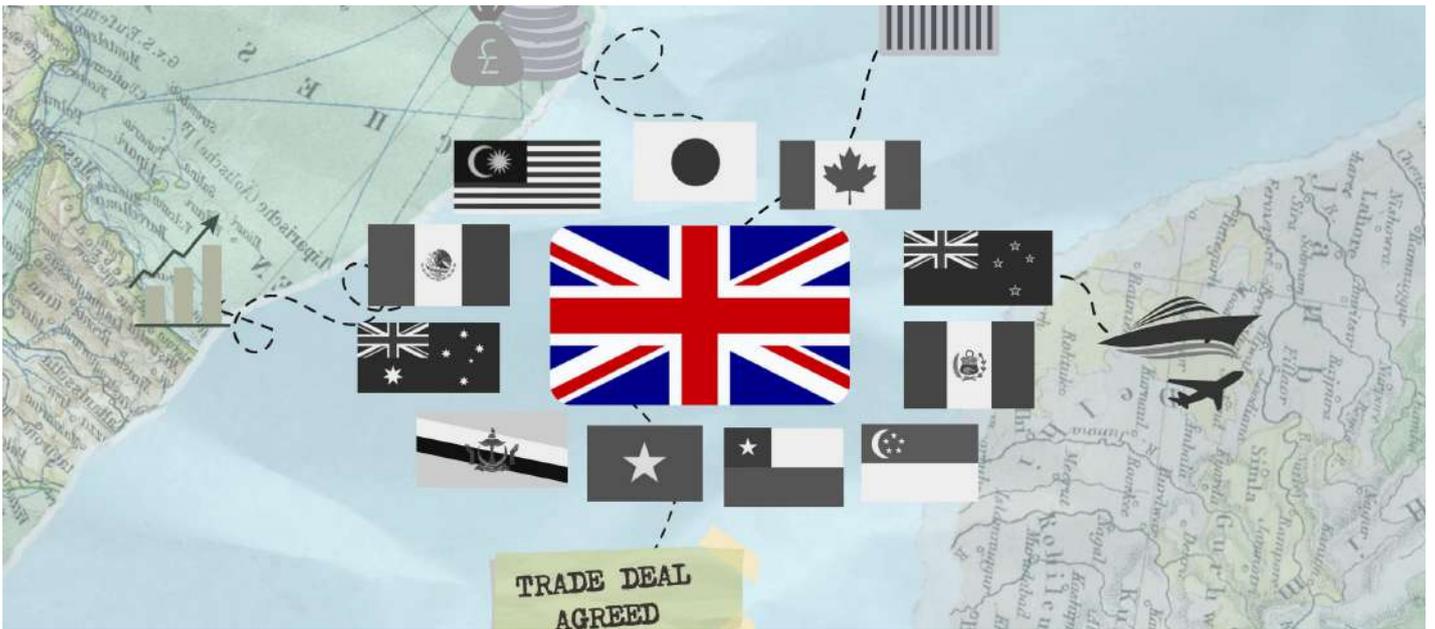
Written by: Nausheen Khan, Journalism, II Year
Artwork By: Udit Paliwal, Psychology, II Year



UK JOINS CPTPP: A POST-BREXIT TRADE MILESTONE

The United Kingdom formally joined the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) on December 15, 2024, marking a significant milestone in its post-Brexit trade strategy. The CPTPP is a major free trade agreement spanning four continents, with 12 member countries including Japan, Australia, and Canada. The UK became the first European nation to join and the bloc's first expansion since its establishment in 2018. This move aligns with the UK's "Indo-Pacific tilt," aiming to strengthen ties with a dynamic region projected to drive global economic growth. Membership grants access to markets worth £12 trillion and reduces trade barriers across sectors like agriculture and services. However, economic gains are modest, with estimates suggesting a GDP boost of just 0.08% over ten years. The UK's accession to the CPTPP marks a strategic shift in its post-Brexit trade policy, enhancing global economic ties while modestly boosting its GDP and reinforcing the bloc's significance in international trade.

Written by: Priyamvada Sharma, Political Science, I Year
Art By: Esha Gupta, Economics, I Year



CALIFORNIA'S CLIMATE CRISIS UNFOLDS

Los Angeles, home to the iconic Hollywood Hills, countless celebrities, and the legendary Hollywood sign, experienced a nightmare on January 7, when the blaze of ruin gleamed and left devastation across the city. The Palisades Fire in Pacific Palisades, east of Malibu, spread rapidly, while the Eaton Fire erupted in the foothills of Angeles National Forest before moving into Altadena. Nearly three months after a series of 14 destructive wildfires which have affected Los Angeles and San Diego of California, investigators have confirmed the total number of deaths to be 30, making it the second-deadliest wildfire in California history.

It has burned over 57,000 acres of land in total, forced more than 200,000 to evacuate, and destroyed more than 18,000 homes and structures. Both of the fires were fully contained on January 31, 2025. While investigating the causes of this deadly wildfire, World Weather Attribution (WWA) has stated that climate change is the major factor that has made the dry and hot weather conditions 35% more conducive to wildfires. The planet isn't just running a fever—it's burning up, and we're stirring the flames. Urgent, trailblazing climate action is imperative.



Written by: Jaisica Tanwar, BAP, II Year
Artwork By: Adviteeya Rajvansh, Political Science, I Year

GLOBAL RIGHTWARD SHIFT: ELECTIONS WORLDWIDE REFLECT RISING EXTREMISM

A sweeping rightward shift is redefining political landscapes across continents, as recent elections reveal the ascendancy of nationalist, populist, and exclusionary ideologies.

In the UK, the 2025 general election marked a significant disruption: Reform UK, led by Richard Tice, secured over 15% of the national vote, siphoning support from both the Conservatives and Labour. Campaigns centered on anti-immigration policies, "British identity," and attacks on "woke culture" dominated media discourse, pushing centrist narratives to the margins.

In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP consolidated its grip through aggressive majoritarian rhetoric during state elections in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Election watchdogs flagged increased online disinformation, communal polarization, and intimidation of opposition candidates. Critics point to shrinking space for dissent, with journalists and academics facing legal reprisals under sedition and anti-terror laws.

In Bangladesh, the ruling Awami League retained power in January 2024 amid opposition boycotts, restricted press, and arrests of key leaders. Meanwhile, Pakistan's 2024 elections were overshadowed by the jailing of former PM Imran Khan and mass protests by his supporters—exposing deep rifts in the country's civil-military dynamics.

Elsewhere, Argentina elected libertarian economist Javier Milei, whose anti-establishment agenda has led to deep spending cuts, currency deregulation, and social welfare rollbacks. In the U.S., Donald Trump's 2028 campaign is already reshaping the Republican field, despite multiple ongoing indictments.

Experts point to shared drivers: economic insecurity, anti-elite sentiment, and cultural anxieties amplified by digital echo chambers. "Populist leaders are weaponizing fear and grievance into enduring political capital," said Dr. Ananya Desai, a global politics scholar.

But the trend is not uncontested.

In Poland, a coalition led by Donald Tusk ousted the ruling Law and Justice Party after eight years, with record 74% turnout among voters under 30. In Brazil, President Lula's administration has reversed key Bolsonaro-era policies on environment and Indigenous rights. Across South Asia, protest movements—from India's farmers and students to Pakistan's youth activists—continue to challenge authoritarian tendencies.

Grassroots mobilizations, feminist collectives, and digital resistance are reshaping the narrative. While the far right rises, so too does a renewed defense of democratic norms. The extremes are advancing—but the fight for the political center is far from over.



*Written by: Disha Dahiya, History, II Year
Artwork By: Monishita Pal, Psychology, I Year*

THE DECLINE OF ORIGINALITY (AND ENVIRONMENT): THE RISE OF AI

Recently, our Instagram feeds have been taken over by the Studio Ghibli trend. It is ironic and unfortunate that what started out as an inspiring and revolutionary art form focusing on feminism, environmentalism, and anti-militarism has been reduced to a soulless animation on Instagram. While Takahata and Miyazaki spent years developing and refining their style, their art has been plagiarised and diluted by AI.

The ease with which AI produces results, often in a matter of seconds, draws people to it. No deep effort is required. Another instance of this is the rampant and rather callous use of AI for the most mundane of writing tasks. For students, writing papers has become 'easy'. Why spend time researching and writing when ChatGPT can do it in minutes?

What often goes unnoticed is the lack of depth and personality in the AI works that follow the same blueprint. Art, whether visual or literary, has always been an expression of the artist's unique vision, passion, and imagination. It is appreciated not only for its beauty but also for its emotional impact. However, when art is created using algorithms and calculations, a personal connection with the artist is lost. AI builds upon what has been done before; it is devoid of any real perspective or personality, linguistic originality and inimitable details that only come from personal experience of the world. AI art has thus led to an erasure of diverse perspectives, personal expressions, and multifaceted results. Consequently, the devaluation and homogenisation of art follow.

Behind the scenes of AI's technical brilliance lies an energy-intensive process with a staggering carbon footprint. Data centres deploying AI models produce high levels of carbon dioxide and hazardous electronic waste.

They also use a large amount of water and energy, which mostly comes from fossil fuels. What is also interesting is the environmental apathy shown by AI users. ChatGPT has replaced Google as the preferred search engine, although a request on ChatGPT consumes ten times the electricity of a Google search.

In the process of using AI for comfort and speed, its irreversible environmental impact and degradation of art and artists are forgotten. Creating art is a laborious but deeply satisfying process. It is a way of conveying our feelings to the world and connecting with each other. While it may create seemingly impressive works, AI intrinsically lacks fundamental human traits that make art what it is.

Written by: Sagarika Jha, Philosophy, II Year

2024: THE YEAR IN FILMS

Payal Kapadia's film, *All We Imagine As Light*, was the first Indian film in 30 years to feature in the main competition section. She further went on to win Best International at the New York Film Critics Circle and the Best International Feature trophy at the reputed Gotham Awards 2024. While an Oscar nomination was anticipated by many after the international buzz around the film, the Film Federation of India (FFI) nominated Kiran Rao's "*Laapataa Ladies*" as India's submission for Best International Feature Film at the 97th Academy Awards. A comment also surfaced from the FFI that Kapadia's film felt like "a European film taking place in India". While viewers greatly appreciated *Laapataa Ladies*, this Kiran Rao directorial too has recently fallen into controversy over plagiarism issues.

Independent cinema continued to receive critical appreciation with Shuchi Talati's *Girls Will Be Girls*.

With Payal Kapadia creating history by winning the Grand Prix award at Cannes 2024 with '*All We Imagine as Light*', 2024 was a year that shed the spotlight on several Indian artistes and won them international accolades. Both *All We Imagine as Light* and *Girls Will Be Girls* signal the rise of female-led narratives in Indian art cinema.

Moreover, several female actors also achieved international acclaim. Anasuya Sengupta became the first Indian to win the prestigious Best Actress Award at Cannes for her portrayal of 'Renuka' in *The Shameless*. Rani Mukherjee was also applauded across the globe for *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*.

While the Censor Board blocked the release of the critically acclaimed film *Santosh* over its portrayal of police brutality and concerns about misogyny and Islamophobia, Bollywood films continued to win global recognition at international film festivals with projects from acclaimed directors like Anurag Kashyap, Rima Das and Nagraj Manjule. Indian films were showcased at prestigious festivals like Sundance, Berlinale, Venice, and Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). The Indian animation industry saw an increase in global collaborations, with many studios seeking partnerships with platforms like Netflix and Disney.



Artwork By: Sneha Verma, Economics, II Year

The surge of OTT platforms continued. Several films like Joram, Kaathal: The Core and Jai Bhim, along with numerous Indian crime thrillers, gained international viewership. 2024 was thus a landmark year for Indian cinema on the global front, reflecting the industry's growing impact and breaking of conventional storytelling barriers.

Written By: Yoganjana Singh, English, II Year

UNDER ATTACK?

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations in northern India faced unprecedented restrictions amid growing communal tensions. In Srinagar, authorities locked the Jama Masjid on Laylat al-Qadr, Islam's holiest night. Haryana, home to almost 18 lakh Muslims, downgraded Eid to a restricted holiday, denying many a day off. In Meerut, police warned that offering Eid prayers on roads could lead to the cancellation of passports and driving licenses.

These measures come amid increasing communal tensions, evidenced by the covering of mosques, arrests of imams, and provocative slogans near Islamic sites. The restrictions have raised concerns about the erosion of religious freedoms in a country known for its pluralistic traditions, sparking criticism from community leaders and civil rights groups.

Written by: Kainaat Arif, Political Science, I Year



THE RETURN OF SUNITA WILLIAMS AND BUTCH WILMORE



NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore returned to Earth on March 18, 2025, after an unanticipated nine-month mission aboard the International Space Station (ISS). The two astronauts embarked on a mission to the International Space Station (ISS) as part of Boeing's first crewed test flight of the Starliner capsule on 6th June, 2024. This mission aimed to test the Starliner's capabilities for potential human spaceflight operations. Originally, their mission was meant to be short-term, but their stay was extended due to technical issues with Boeing's Starliner capsule, majorly helium leaks and propulsion system malfunctions.

In spite of these delays, both astronauts were positive about the future of Starliner, stressing their confidence in NASA and Boeing. They pointed out the need for resilience and flexibility in space missions and the need to learn from such setbacks. Their return heralds an important milestone in commercial spaceflight, reiterating the imperative of extensive testing and innovation to make subsequent missions safer and more reliable.

Written by: Saanvi Dudeja, Economics, I Year

CLASS DISMISSED: TRUMP'S REPORT CARD READS CHAOS, CUTS & CONTROVERSY

President Donald Trump is rewriting America's policy playbook in his second term—starting with education and economics. He has ordered the closure of the Department of Education, laying off 1,300 staffers and shifting power to the states. DEI programs have been defunded, leaving schools with a choice: drop inclusion initiatives or lose federal money. Universities that resist could also see funding vanish faster than a missed FAFSA deadline.

Meanwhile, Trump's tariffs are back with a vengeance, jolting Wall Street and raising recession alarms. His economic blueprint extends the 2017 tax cuts and channels billions into border security—at the cost of a projected \$6.9 trillion deficit spike. Sweeping tariffs have pushed the U.S. effective tariff rate to approximately 22%, in a bid to boost domestic manufacturing and cut trade deficits. The result? Significant market volatility, with the Dow Jones suffering its sharpest downturn since 2020, wiping out around \$3.1 trillion in value.

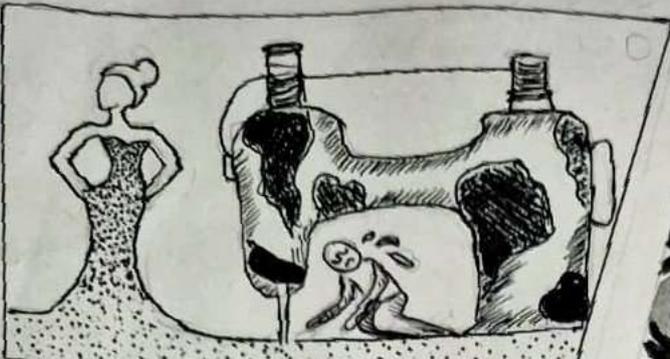
From blackboards to balance sheets, Trump's second-term strategy is bold, bulldozing norms and polarizing policy. Whether it's reform or ruin depends on which side of the aisle you ask—but one thing's certain: the bell has rung on business as usual.



Written by: Swonshutaa Dash. English, II Year

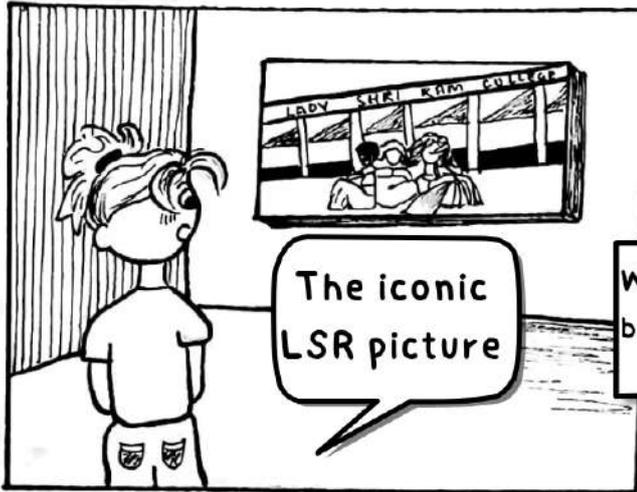
DADS WITH THE DOG THEY DIDN'T WANT



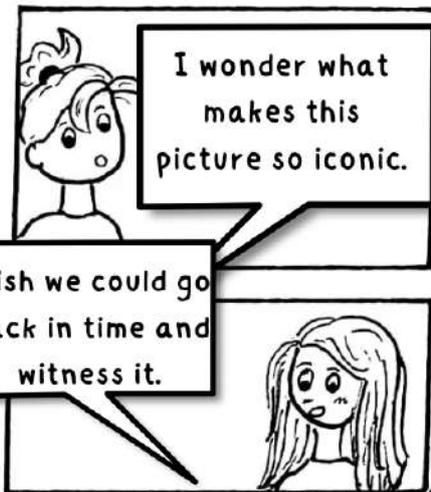


From Shadows to SUNSHINE!!!





The iconic LSR picture

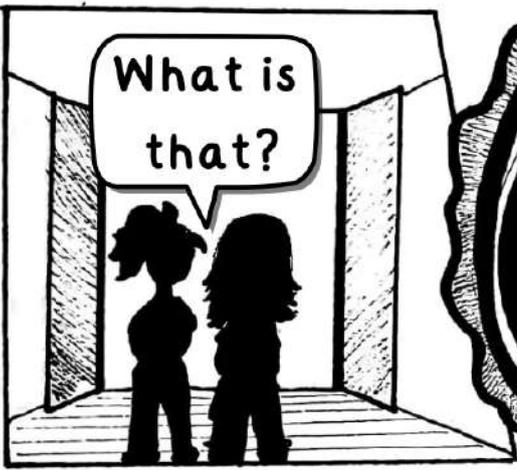


I wonder what makes this picture so iconic.

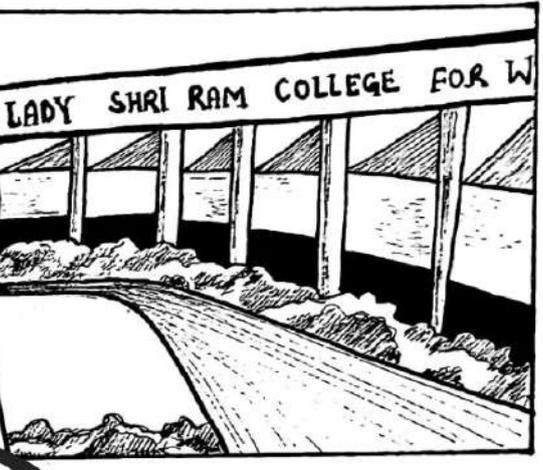
Wish we could go back in time and witness it.



Wellness Center for now it is.



What is that?



Woah!! are we back in time or something?

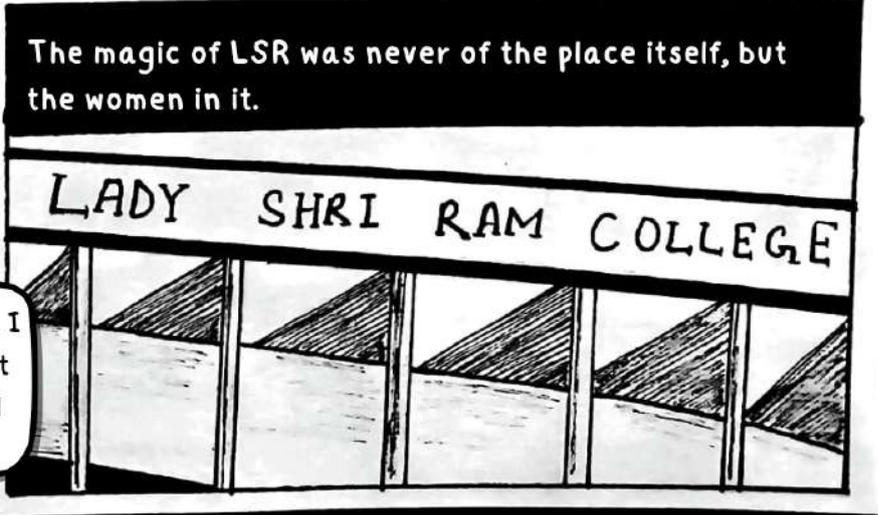
I think we are back in time!

Do you wanna go to front lawns and witness the picture?

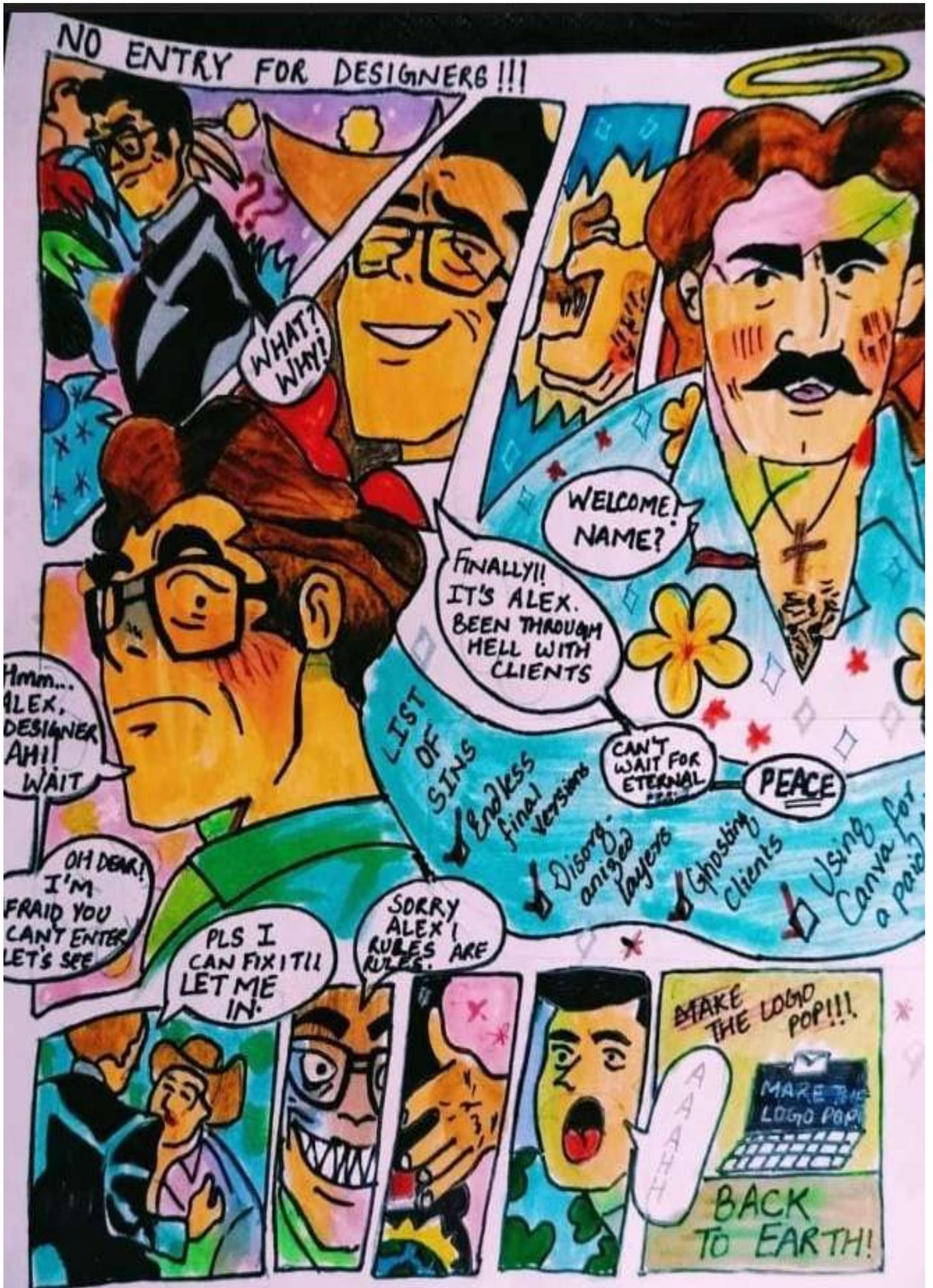
Yes!



They look so happy. They just want to capture their memories at LSR in one picture.
They're just girls. I think that is what LSR has been all about.



The magic of LSR was never of the place itself, but the women in it.



ASSIGNMENT CRUNCH



Comic By: Tanisha Gupta, BAP, I Year



DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION



DEPARTMENT OF B.A PROGRAMME



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS - A



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS - B



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH-A



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH-B



DEPARTMENT OF HINDI



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY-A



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY-B



DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM



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DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE - A



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DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS



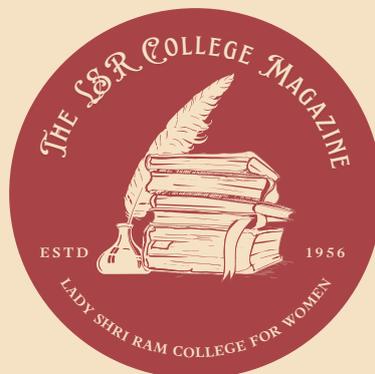
Artwork By: Khushi Joshi, Psychology, II Year



“सा विद्या या विमुक्तये”

*“That alone is knowledge which
leads to liberation.”*

SCAN TO ACCESS THE AUDIO VERSION



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